

MEMOIRS

OF

Miss SIDNEY BIDULPH,

Extracted from *K*

HER OWN JOURNAL,

And now First Published.

In Two VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

Printed by and for G. FAULKNER.

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M E M O I R S

O F

Miss Sidney Bidulph

Extracted from



HER O V J U R N A L

And now first published.

In Two Volumes.

V O L I

D U B L I N :

Printed by and for G. F. A. L. L. E. Y.

M D C C L X I



TH E Editor of the following
heets takes this opportunity of
paying the tribute due to exemplary
Goodness and distinguished Genius,
when found united in One Person, by
inscribing these Memoirs to

T H E A U T H O R

O F

C L A R I S S A

A N D

Sir CHARLES GRANDISON.



THE Editor of the following
sheets takes the opportunity of
paying the tribute due to exemplary
Gentlemen and distinguished Characters
when found in the following list
including their names.

THE AUTHOR

OF

CLARISSA

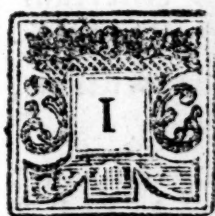
AND

BY CHARLES GRANDBORN.



T H E

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION.



WAS invited to pass a month last summer in Buckinghamshire by a friend, who paid annually a visit to his mother: a lady pretty far advanced in years, but extremely chearful, sensible, and well-bred.

She lived altogether in the country, in a good old fashioned house, which was part of her jointure; and it was to this hospitable mansion he carried me.

The lady received me very politely, as her son's friend; and I have great reason to be obliged to him for the introduction.

VOL. I.

B

My

My friend and I generally dedicated our evenings to the entertainment of this obliging Lady. She loved reading, and was a woman of an excellent taste; but as her years rendered that employment not so easy to her as it had been, her son and myself usually spared her the task, and read to her such authors as she chose for her entertainment; nor was she so confined to particular studies, as not to allow us to vary our subjects as inclination led us.

It happened one evening, which was on the eve of the day appointed for our departure, that we had made choice of the tragedy of Douglas for our entertainment, when a neighbouring lady (a sensible woman) who had drank tea with us, desired to make one of our auditors.

After the tea-table was removed, we entered on our task; my friend and I reading alternately, to relieve each other, that we might not injure the performance by a wearied or flat delivery.

Neither of the ladies had ever seen or read this play before; and both gave that true testimony of nature to its merit, tears.

When we had finished the reading of it, they each in her turn bestowed high praises on it; but the visitor lady said,
that

that notwithstanding the pleasure it had afforded her upon the whole, she had one great objection to it. We were all impatient to know what it was. I think, said she, that the moral which it inculcates is a discouraging lesson, especially to youth; for the blooming hero of this story, though adorned with the highest virtues of humanity, truth, modesty, gratitude, filial piety, nobleness of mind, and valour in the most eminent degree, is not only buried in obscurity, by a severe destiny, 'till he arrives at manhood, but when he emerges into light, is suddenly cut off by an untimely death, and that at a juncture too, when we might (morally speaking) say his virtues *ought* to have been rewarded.

We each spoke our thoughts on the subject, as opinion led us, when the old lady drew our attention, which she always does, whenever she delivers her sentiments.

I should think as you do, madam, said she, if there were not too many melancholy precedents to give a sanction to the fable of that tragedy. I do not say but that the poet, who is at liberty to dispose as he pleases of the works of his own creation, may as well reward and punish according to the measures of justice in this life; it might

perhaps make a better impression, and indeed afford a more prevalent example to the generality of young people. I say therefore, I do not take upon me to defend an opposite conduct upon principles of poetic justice, but surely the poet who prefers that course, may be justified in it from every day's experience. If we always saw virtuous people successful in their pursuits, and their days crowned with prosperity, there would be more force in your objection; but the direct contrary is a truth, which every body who has lived but a moderate number of years, must have been convinced of from their own observation. Amongst heathens indeed, who looked no farther than *this* life for good and evil, and whose only incitement to virtue was the praise of men, or what *they* called glory, such morals might be dangerous; but surely amongst us Christians they *cannot*, at least *ought* not to have any ill effect.

On the contrary, I think it should serve to confirm that great lesson which we are all taught indeed, but which we seldom think of reducing to practice, *viz.* to use the good things of this life with that indifference, which things that are neither permanent in their own nature, nor of any estimation in the sight of God, deserve.

ON

On the other hand, to consider the evils which befall us, as equally temporary, and no more dispensed by the great ruler of all things for punishments, than the others are for rewards ; and by thus estimating both, to look forward for an equal distribution of justice, to that place only, where (let our station be what it will) our lot is to be unchangeable. It is in this light that I was instructed in my early days, to consider the various portions that fall to the share of mankind ; which very often, as far as we can see, appear extremely partial ; and no doubt would really be so, were there not an invisible world where the distributions are just and equal. From this reflection I have drawn comfort in many trying incidents of my life ; but in none more than the unhappy fate of a lady, who was my particular friend ; and who, tho' a woman of most exemplary virtue, was, thro' the course of her whole life, persecuted by a variety of strange misfortunes. This lady, to use your expression, madam (addressing her friend), to all human appearance, *ought* at last to have been rewarded even here—but her portion was affliction. What then are we to conclude ? but, that God does not estimate things as we do. It is ignorant, as well as sinful, to arraign his providence. We daily see its dispensations with our own eyes, in the va-

rious accidents of life. Why should we not then allow the poet to copy from life, and exhibit to our view events, the probability of which are founded on general experience?

We are indeed so much used to what they call poetical justice, that we are disappointed in the catastrophe of a fable, if every body concerned in it be not disposed of according to the sentence of that judge which we have set up in our own breasts.

The contrary we know happens in real life; let us not then condemn what is drawn from real life.—We may wish to see nature copied from her more pleasing works; but a martyr expiring in tortures, is as just, though not as agreeable, a representation of her, as a hero rewarded with the brightest honours.

We agreed with the venerable lady in her observations; and her son taking occasion from her mentioning that unfortunate person, who was her friend, told her, he would take it as a particular favour, if she would oblige me with the sight of that lady's story.

She answered, that as we had fixed upon the next day for our departure, there would not be time for me to peruse it, but that she would entrust me with it to take it to town, that I might read it at my leisure. It is
drawn

drawn up, said she, for the most part, by the lady herself, and the occasion of its being so was this. She and I had been intimate from our childhood; we were playfellows when young, and constant companions as we grew up. We always called each other sister, and loved as well as if we had really borne that relationship to each other. It was our continual practice, from children, to keep little journals of what daily happened to us; these, in all our short absences, were matter of great entertainment to us; we constantly communicated them when we met, or if we chanced to be separated by any distance, we made a mutual exchange by the post of our little diurnal registers, having made each a solemn promise, not to conceal an incident, or even a thought, of the least moment, from the other; and this promise I believe was religiously kept up during a correspondence of many years.

I had a brother about three years older than myself; a very promising young man. He was an only son, and the darling of his parents: when he had finished his studies, my father thought of sending him abroad, but his fondness for him made him resolve to accompany him himself.

A better tutor or a better guide he could not have found for him; my father was

then in the prime of life, he had no other children but him and me. My mother, as fond of me as he was of his son, and perfectly affectionate to my father, expressed her wish to let both her and me be of this party. She said, she thought a young lady, under proper conduct, might improve as much by seeing foreign courts, and the various customs of different nations, as a young gentleman.

I was then about sixteen : my father readily consented, as he perfectly loved my mother ; and we all four set out on our tour together. It was my lot, after I had been some time abroad, to marry an English gentleman, then resident at Vienna ! this occasioned my continuing there some years, and it was during that space of time, that I had the occurrences of my friend's life from her own hand. As she had kept up to the method we had agreed on of communicating every thing that happened, even to trivial matters, it generally increased the bulk of the packets I used to receive from her, to a prodigious size : these she sent off occasionally, at nearer or more distant periods of time, according as I gave her the opportunity, by letting her know our motions.

I have from those papers selected the most material parts of her history, and connected

nected them so as to make one continued narrative.

There were long intervals of time between many of the most important incidents of her life; but as the passages which intervened were either foreign to the main scope of her story, or too trivial to be recorded, in copying her papers they were omitted.

I have myself prefixed to her story a very brief account of the lady's family.

Thus much, Sir, added the good lady, I thought necessary to premise to you, for your better understanding her history, which I have never yet shewn to any body but my son.

When I took my leave, she put the manuscript into my hands, with a charge to be careful of it

We returned to town, and in less than three weeks I had the mortification to hear that this respectable old Lady, by whom I had been entertained with so much friendship and politeness, was dead. Her son (my friend) was on this occasion obliged to go down into Buckinghamshire; it was some months before I saw him again, as he had a good deal of family business to settle.

When he came back to London, I offered to return him the manuscript, which he had quite forgot. He told me, as he had

all the original papers, *that* the copy was at my service.

I then expressed my wish that it were made public. To this he at first objected, as he said there were several persons living, related to the parties concerned in some of the principal events of the story, who might take umbrage at it. I told him, that this might easily be obviated, by changing the names both of persons and places, which I would undertake to do throughout the whole; and I was afterwards so urgent with him to comply with my request, that he at last yielded. With his consent therefore I give it to the world, just as I received it, without any alteration, excepting the proposed one of a change of names.

MEMOIRS



M E M O I R S

O F

Miss SIDNEY BIDULPH.




 R S. Catherine Sidney Bidulph,


 M was the Daughter of Sir Robert


 Bidulph of Wiltshire. Her fa-


 ther died when she was very
 young; and of ten children none survived
 him but this lady, and his eldest son, after-
 wards Sir George Bidulph. The family
 estate was not very considerable; and Miss
 Bidulph's portion was but four thousand
 pounds; a fortune however at that time
 not quite contemptible: it was in the begin-
 ning of queen Ann's reign.

Lady

Lady Bidulph was a woman of plain sense but exemplary piety; the strictness of her notions (highly commendable in themselves) now and then gave a tincture of severity to her actions, though she was ever esteemed a truly good woman.

She had educated her daughter, who was one of the greatest beauties of her time, in the strictest principles of virtue; from which she never deviated, through the course of an innocent, though unhappy life.

Sir George Bidulph was nine or ten years older than his sister. He was a man of a good understanding, moral as to his general conduct, but void of any of those refined sentiments, which constitute what is called *delicacy*. Pride is sometimes accounted laudable; that which Sir George possessed (for he had pride) was not of this kind.

He was of a weakly constitution, and had been ordered by the physicians to Spa for the recovery of a lingering disorder, which he had laboured under for some time. It was just on his return to England that the busy scene of his sister's life opened. An intimate friend of hers, of her own sex, to whom she revealed all the secrets of her heart, happened at this juncture to go abroad, and it was for her perusal only the following journal was intended. That friend
has

Miss Sidney Bidulph.

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has carefully preserved it, as she thinks it may serve for an example to prove, that neither prudence, foresight, nor even the best disposition that the human heart is capable of, are of themselves sufficient to defend us against the inevitable ills that sometimes are allotted, even to the best. 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.'

The JOURNAL.

April 2, 1703.

MY dear and ever-beloved Cecilia is now on her way to Harwich. How insipid will this task of recording all the little incidents of the day now appear to me, when you, my sister, friend of my heart, are no longer near me? how many tedious months will it be before I again embrace you? how many Days of impatience must I suffer before I can even hear from you, or communicate to you the actions, the words, the thoughts of your Sidney?—But let me not grow plaintive, the stile my friend hates—I should be ungrateful (if I indulged it) to the best of mothers, who, to gratify and amuse me on this first occasion of sorrow
which

which I ever experienced, has been induced to quit her beloved retirement, and come on purpose to London, to rouse up my spirits, and, as she expresses herself, to keep me from the sin of murmuring.

Avaunt then, complainings! Let me rest assured that my Cecilia is happy in her pursuits, and let me resolve on making myself so in mine.

April 3. We have had a letter from my brother George; he is landed, and we expect him hourly in town. As our house is large enough, I hope he will consent to take up his quarters with us while we stay in London. My mother intends to request it of him: she says it will be for the *reputation* of a gay young man to live in a *sober* family. I know not how Sir George may relish the proposal, as our hours are not likely to correspond with those which I suppose he has been used to since he has been absent from us. But perhaps he may not refuse the compliment; Sir George is not averse to œconomy.—— How kind, how indulgent, is this worthy parent of mine! she will not suffer me to stay at home with her, nay, scarce allows me time for my journal. ‘ Sidney, I won’t have
‘ you stay within; I won’t have you write;
‘ I won’t have you think—I will make a
‘ rake

‘ rake of you; you shall go to the play to-
‘ night, and I am almost tempted to go with
‘ you myself, though I have not been at one
‘ since your father’s death.’—These were
her kind expressions to me just now.—I am
indeed indebted to her tenderness, when she
relaxes so much of her usual strictness, as
even to *think* of such a thing.

April 5.—My brother returned to us this
day, thank God! in perfect health. Never
was there such an alteration seen in a man;
he is grown fat, and looks quite robust. He
dropped in upon us just as we sat down to
dinner: what a clutter has his arrival made!
my mother was *so* rejoyc’d, and *so* thank-
ful, and *so* full of praises, and asked *so* many
questions, that George could hardly find
words enough to answer the over-flowings of
her kind inquisitiveness, which lasted all
dinner-time.

When the cloth was removed, my mother
proposed his taking up his abode with us:
you see, said she, your sister and I have got
here into a large house; there is full room
enough in it for you and your servants; and as
I think in such a town as this it will be a repu-
table place for you to live in, I should be
glad of your company; provided you do
not encroach upon my rules by unreasonable
hours,

hours, or receiving visits from such as I may not approve of for the acquaintance of your sister. I was afraid Sir George would disrelish the terms, as perhaps some of his acquaintance (though far from faulty ones) might fall within my mother's predicament: but I was mistaken, he accepted of the invitation, after making some slight apologies about the inconvenience of having so many servants: this however was soon got over.

To say the truth, I am very glad that my brother has consented to be our guest, as I hope by his means our circle of acquaintance will be a good deal enlarged. There is no pleasure in society, without a proper mixture of well-bred sensible people of both sexes, and I have hitherto been chiefly confined to those of my own.

I asked Sir George, jocosely, what he had brought me home? he answered, perhaps a good husband.—My mother caught up the word—What do you mean, Son? I mean, madam, that there is come over with me a gentleman, with whom I became acquainted in Germany, who of all the men I ever knew, I should wish to have for a brother. If Sidney should fortunately be born under the influence of *uncommonly* good stars, it may happen to be brought about. I can tell you (applying himself to me) he is prepos-
fessed

ferred in your favour already ; I have shewn him some of your letters, and he thinks you a good sensible girl. I told him you were very well in your person, and that you have had an excellent education. I hope so, said my mother, looking pleased ; and what have you to tell us of this wonderful man that so much surpasses every body ? Why, madam, for *your* part of his character, he is the best *behaved* young man I ever saw. I never knew anybody equal to him for sobriety, nor so intirely free from all the other vices of youth : as I lived in the same house with him for some months, I had frequent opportunities of making my observations. I have known him to *avoid* many irregularities, but never saw him guilty of *one*.

An admirable character, indeed, said my mother. So thought I too ; but I wanted to know a little more of him. Now, Sidney, for your share in the description ; I must tell you he is most exquisitely handsome, and extremely sensible.

Good sense to be sure is requisite, said my mother, but as for beauty it is but a fading flower at best, and in a man not at all necessary—A man is not the worse for it, however, cried my brother—No—my mother answered, provided it does not make him vain, and too fond of the admiration of giddy girls

girls—That I will be sworn is not the case of my friend, answered Sir George, I believe no body with such a person as his (if there *can* be such another) would be so little vain of it; nay, I have heard him declare, that even in a woman he would give the preference to sense and virtue.

Good young man! cried my mother, I should like to be acquainted with him (So should I, whispered I to my own heart.)

Well, brother, said I, you have drawn a good picture; but to make it complete, you must throw in generosity, valour, sweetness of temper, and a great deal of money—Fie, my dear (said my good *literal* parent) a *great deal* is not necessary; a very moderate fortune with such a man is sufficient.

The good qualities you require in the finishing of my piece, answered my brother, he possesses in an eminent degree—will that satisfy you? As for his fortune—*there* perhaps a difficulty may step in—What estate, madam, (to my mother) do you think my sister's fortune may entitle her to?

Dear brother, I cried, pray do not speak in that *bargaining* way.

My mother answered him very gravely, your father you know left her but four thousand pounds; it is in my power to add a *little* to it, if she marries to please me. Great matters

matters we have no right to expect ; but a *very* good girl, as my daughter is, I think, deserves something more than a bare equivalent. The equality, said my brother, (with a demure look) I fear is out of all proportion here, for the gentleman I spake of has but———six thousand pounds a year.

He burst out a laughing ; it was not good-natured, and I was vexed at his joke. My poor mother dropped her countenance ; I looked silly, as if I had been disappointed, but I said nothing.

Then he is above our reach, Sidney, answered my mother.

I made no reply—Have a good heart, Sid, cried my brother ; if my nonpareil likes you, when he sees you, (I felt myself hurt, and grow red) and without a compliment, sister, (seeing me look mortified) I think he will, fortune will be no objection. I have already told him the utmost extent of your expectations ; he would hardly let me mention the subject ; he has a mind for my sister, and if he finds her personal accomplishments answer a brother's (perhaps partial) description, it will be your own fault, if you have not the prettiest fellow in England for your husband.

My mother reassumed her pleased countenance. Where is he ? let us see him ? I forced a smile, though I did not feel myself quite

quite satisfied--We parted on the road, my brother answered; he is gone to Bath for a few weeks; he has sent his servants and his baggage to town before him, and has commissioned me to take a house for him in St. James's Square, or some of the adjacent streets; so that we shall have him in our neighbourhood.

My mother enquired on what account he went to Bath. Sir George said he complained of a weakness in one of his wrists, which was the consequence of a fever that had seized him on his journey, in their return to England. It seems he had finished his travels, on which he had been absent near five years, when my brother and he met in Germany. The liking he took to Sir George protracted his stay, and he resolved not to quit him while his health obliged him to continue abroad; they took a trip to Paris together, and returned home by Holland.

The name of this piece of perfection is Faulkland, Orlando Faulkland. What a pretty name Orlando is! My mother says it is romantic, and wonders how *sober* people can give their children such names.

Now am I dying with curiosity to see this man. A few weeks at Bath---what business had he to go to Bath till he had first settled his household at London? His wrist
might

might have grown well without the pump. I am afraid he is gone to Bath only to shew himself, and that he will be snapped up before he comes to town. I wish Sir George had kept the account of him to himself, till he returned to London again.

April 7.—We have settled Sir George's œconomy within doors: my mother has been very busy all day in fixing trunks, portmanteaus, and boxes, in their proper places; and in appropriating the rooms for his men, which she has taken care shall be as remote from those of our servants as the house will admit. She says, she knows our own domestics to be orderly and regular, but she cannot answer what other people's may be.

I begin to recover my spirits: my brother's arrival has given new life to the family; my mother thinks that in *his* company, with a lady or two, there will be no impropriety in suffering me to go, at least, half a dozen times into public during the season, even without the sanction of her presence——How kind, how considerate is this dear mother! I find this was one (amongst others) of her principal reasons for wishing Sir George to be with us, as it will save her from the necessity of going to public diversions, which otherwise she would have done, rather than
have

have me debarred the pleasure of partaking of them, through the want of a proper protector. Every day lays me under fresh obligations to her.

April 20.—My brother has had another letter from Mr. Faulkland. He has been but a fortnight at Bath, and already has found benefit from the use of the pump; I wish his wrist was quite well; I never was so impatient to see any body—But, Sidney, have a care—this heart has never yet been touched: this man is represented as a dangerous object. What an ill-fated girl should I be, if I should fall in love with him, and he should happen not to like me? Should *happen*, what a vain expression was that! I would not for the world any one should see it but my Cecilia.---Well, if he should not like me, what then? why, I will not like him. If I have a heart, not very susceptible of what we young women call love; and in all likelihood I shall be as indifferent to him, as he may be to me---Indeed I think I ought to resolve on not liking him; for notwithstanding those fine out-lines of a character, which my brother gave me of him in the presence of my mother, I have since drawn out of Sir George, who is always talking of him, some farther particulars which do not please

please me so well ; for I think he is made up of contrarieties.

Nature, says Sir George, never formed a temper so gentle, so humane, so benevolent as his ; yet, when provoked, no tempest is more furious. You would imagine him so humble, that he thinks every one superior to himself ; yet through this disguise have I discovered, at certain times, a pride which makes him look down on all mankind. With a disposition formed to relish, and a heart attached to the domestic pleasures of life, he is of so enterprizing a temper, that dangers and difficulties rather encourage than dishearten him, in the pursuit of a favourite point. His ideas of love, honour, generosity, and gratitude, are so refined, that no hero in romance ever went beyond him ; of this I was convinced from many little incidents which occurred in the course of my acquaintance with him. The modesty and affability of his deportment makes every body fancy, when he is in company with them, that he is delighted with their conversation ; nay, he often affects to be improved and informed ; yet there is a sly turn to ridicule in him, which, though without the least tincture of ill-nature, makes him see and represent things in a light, the very opposite of that in which you fancied he saw them.

them. With the nicest discernment, where he permits his judgment alone to determine, let passion interfere, and a child can impose on him. Though, as I have already told you, he is very handsome, he affects to despise beauty in his own sex; yet is it easy to perceive, by the nice care he takes in his dress (though the farthest in the world from a fop,) that he does not altogether disregard it in his own person.

Are not these faults? yes, surely they are; yet Sir George protests he has none; or at least says, if these be such, they are so overballanced by his good qualities, that unless it be *you*, sister (flattering creature! though that is seldom his failing) I don't know the woman that deserves him. I did not thank him for the compliment he paid me, at the expence of the rest of our poor sex.

May 5.---A month is past since my brother arrived, and Mr. Faulkland does not yet talk of coming to town---If Sir George had drawn half such a flattering picture of me to him, as he has done of him to me, his curiosity would have brought him here sooner.---My mother has mentioned him several times, and asked when he is to be in town? My brother has taken a very handsome house for him in the Square. We are all in expectation of this blazing star's making its appearance

pearance in London. If he stays much longer, my patience will be so tired, that I will not give a pinch of snuff to see him.

May 19.—Six weeks, and no news of Mr. Faulkland's coming! I'll positively give him but another week; I begin to think myself affronted at his stay.

May 23.——Now, now, my Cecilia, I can gratify your curiosity at full: he is come at last; Mr. Faulkland, I mean; Orlando is come! we had a message from him this morning, to enquire after all our healths; he was just arrived at his house in the Square: Sir George flew to him directly, and said he would bring him without ceremony to take a family dinner. My mother bid him do so, and she held a quarter of an hour's conference with her cook. She is always elegant and exact at her table; but we were more than ordinarily so to-day. My brother brought Mr. Faulkland a little before dinner-time, and presented him to my mother and me, with that kind of freedom that almost looked as if he were already one of the family.

We had both been prepossessed highly in favour of his figure, a circumstance that seldom is of advantage to persons on their first appearance: but here it had not that effect: Sir George did not over rate the personal ac-

complishments of his friend. Now you'll expect I should describe him to you, perhaps, and paint this romantic hero in the glowing colours of romantic exaggeration. But I'll disappoint you——and tell you, that he is neither like an Adonis nor an Apollo——that he has no hyacinthine curls flowing down his back ; no eyes like suns, whose brightness and majesty strike the beholders dumb ; nor, in short, no rays of divinity about him ; yet he is the handsomest mortal man that I ever saw.——I will not say that his voice is harmony itself, and that all the loves and graces (for why should not there be male as well as female graces ?) attend on his motions ; that Minerva presides over his lips, and every feature has its attendant Cupid——But I will acknowledge that his voice in speaking is inexpressibly pleasing (you know how I admire an agreeable voice ;) that his air and motions are easy, genteel, and graceful ; his conversation sensible and polite, and without the least tincture of affectation, that thing, which of all others, would to *me* destroy the charms of an angel.——In short, without hyperbole, that he is, what every one must allow, a perfectly handsome and accomplished young man.

I never saw my mother appear so pleased with any one. The polite freedom of his address, the attention and deference he seemed

seemed to pay to her sentiments (and the dear good woman talked more to him, I think, than ever I heard her do to any one on so short an acquaintance,) delighted her beyond expression. I bore no great part in the conversation, but was not, however, quite overlooked by Mr. Faulkland. He referred to me in discourse now and then, and seemed pleased with me; at least I fancied so. My brother endeavoured to draw me out, as he said afterwards. The intention was kind, but poor Sir George is not delicate enough in those matters; I should have done better if he had let me alone. I thought of the conversations we have so often had about Mr. Faulkland, and could not help considering myself like a piece of goods that was to be shewn to the best advantage to the purchaser. This reflection threw a sort of constraint over my behaviour, that (fool as I was) I had not courage enough to shake off, and I did not acquit myself at all to my own mind. I had, notwithstanding, the good fortune to please my mother infinitely. She told me, after our visitor was gone, that my behaviour had been *strictly* proper; and blamed Sir George for his wanting to engage me too often in conversation. You may assure yourself, son, she said, that a man of Mr. Faulkland's understanding will not like a young lady the worse for her silence. She spoke

enough to shew that it was not for want of knowing what to say that she held her tongue. The man who does not reckon a modest reserve amongst the chief recommendations of a woman, should be no husband for Sidney. I am sure, when I married Sir Robert, he had never heard me speak twenty sentences. Sir George agreed with her as to the propriety of her observation, in regard to a modest reserve; but said, people now-a-days did not carry their ideas of it quite so far as they did when his father's courtship began with her; and added that a young lady might *speak* with as much modesty as she could hold her tongue.

I did not interfere in the debate, only said, I was very glad to have my mother's approbation of my conduct. This put an end to the argument, and my mother launched out into high encomiums on Mr. Faulkland. She said, upon her *truth*, he was the finest young man she ever saw, in every respect. So modest, so well bred, so very entertaining, and so unassuming, with all his fine accomplishments: She was quite astonished; and owned she had almost despaired of finding a young gentleman, of the present mode of education, so *very* unexceptionable in his behaviour. If his morals answered to his outward deportment——there she stopped; or rather Sir George interrupted

interrupted her. I hope you'll believe, madam, that my knowledge of mankind is not so circumscribed, but that I can distinguish between a real and an assumed character; and I will venture to assert, that, in the circle of my acquaintance, I do not know *one* so unobjectionable, even in your strict sense of the word *morals*, as Mr. Faulkland.

Well, said my mother, I have the pleasure to observe to you (and I think I am seldom mistaken in my judgment,) that Mr. Faulkland is at least as well pleased with Sidney as we are with him---What say you? daughter, Ay, what *say* you, sister? cried Sir George ---I think, madam, that Mr. Faulkland is an accomplished gentleman, and---‘and
‘ that you could be content to look no farther, if matters are brought to bear; eh,
‘ Sidney?’ (I need not tell you whose speech this was) --- Brother, that is going a little too far, for the first time of my seeing him. A great *deal* too far, my mother said; let us first know Mr. Faulkland's mind from himself, before we say a word more of the matter.

Sir George told us, that Mr. Faulkland, at going away, had requested he would sup with him at his own house, as he said he had a few visits of form to pay, and should be at home early in the evening.

May 24.——My mother and I were in bed before my brother came in last night, though he keeps very good hours in general. When we met this morning at breakfast, I saw by Sir George's face that he was brimful of something---Faulkland don't like you, Sidney, said he, abruptly---How can you or I help that, brother? cry'd I, colouring; tho', to tell you the truth, I did not believe him; for I knew, if it *had* been so, he would not have come out with it so bluntly. But my mother, who always takes every word she hears literally, took him up very short; 'If he does not, Sir, it is not polite in you to tell your sister so; I hope Sidney may be *liked* by as good a man as Mr. Faulkland,' and up she tossed her dear honest head. Sir George burst out a laughing. My mother looked angry; she was afraid her sagacity would be called in question, after what she had pronounced the evening before. I looked silly, but pretended to smile. Sir George was clown enough to laugh on; at last (to my mother) 'But, my dear madam, can you believe me serious in what I have said? have you so good an opinion of my veracity, or so ill a one of my breeding, as to suppose I would shock my sister by so rude a declaration, if I meant any thing by it but a joke?' Indeed,

deed, Sidney, (looking half smiling at me) I would not be as much in love with our sovereign lady the queen, as poor Faulkland is with you, for my whole estate.

This put me a great deal more out of countenance than what he had said at first. Nay, brother, now you are too extravagant the other way——My mother looked surprised, but recovered her good humour presently——Dear George, there is no knowing when you are in earnest, and when not: but, as Sidney says, now you are rather too extravagant. You might say so to Faulkland, answered my brother, if you were to hear him; I could get nothing from him the whole night but your praises. I thought, said my pleased mother, he had not *disliked* the girl——Now you see, son, her *silence* did her no harm; and she smiled tenderly at me. Come, said Sir George, things are mighty well on both sides. Faulkland has begged of me, that I would use my interest with your mother, (whom he thinks one of the best of women,) that he may be permitted to form to make his addresses to Miss Bidulph. My interest he knows he has, and I hope, madam, it will have your approbation.—He desired me to explain minutely every circumstance of his fortune: what his estate is, I have told you; and his family is of

C. 4 known

known distinction. He begged I would not *mention* Sidney's fortune; and said, that if, upon farther acquaintance, he should have the happiness to be acceptable to my sister, he should insist upon leaving the appointment of her settlement to lady Bidulph and myself. I told him I would lay this proposal before you, and could for his present comfort inform him, that, as I believed my sister had no prepossessions in favour of any one else, I was sure that if he met with your concurrence, her's would follow of course.

A very discreet answer, said my mother; just such a one as I would have dictated to you, if I had been at your elbow. I believe we may venture to suppose, that Mrs. Sidney *has* no prepossessions; and as this is as handsome an offer as can possibly be made, I have no objections (if you have none, my dear) to admit Mr. Faulkland upon the terms he proposes.

What answer ought I to have made, Cecilia? Why, to be sure, just the one I *did* make—I have no prepossessions, madam, looking down and blushing, till it had actually painted me, for I was really startled. My Cecilia knows I am not a prude.

My dear! cry'd my mother, and took me by the hand——

Poor Sidney, said Sir George, how you are to be pitied! Mr. Faulkland purposes
waiting

waiting on you in the afternoon, if he is not *forbid*; and he looked so teasingly sly, that my mother bid him leave off his *pranks*.

The day is over——Mr. Faulkland spent the evening with us; no other company but our own family. My mother likes him better even than before——Thy *mother*——disingenuous girl! why dost thou not speak thy *own* sentiments! (There is an apostrophe for thy use, my Cecilia.) Well then, *my* sentiments you shall have; you have an undoubted right to know them on all subjects, but particularly on this interesting one.

I *do* think Mr. Faulkland the most amiable of men; and if my heart were (happily for me it is not) *very* susceptible of tender impressions, I really believe I should in time be absolutely in love with him. This confession will not satisfy you: may be it is not enough---yet, in truth, Cecilia, it is all that at present I can afford you.

The thoughts of the awkward figure I should make in the evening visit, sat heavy on my spirits all day.---Can you conceive any thing more distressing than the situation of a poor girl, receiving the visit of a man, who for the first time, comes professedly as her admirer? I had conceived a frightful idea of such an interview, having formed my notions of it only from romances, where set speeches of an ell long are made by the
C 5 lover,

lover, and answers of a proportionable size are returned in form by the lady. But Mr. Faulkland soon delivered me from my anxiety. His easy, but incomparably polite and sensible freedom of address, quickly made me lose my ridiculous fears.---He made no other use of his visit, than to recommend himself more strongly to our esteem, by such means as proved how well he deserved it. If he was particular to me either in his looks or manner, it was under the regulation of such a nice decorum, that I (who supposed I must have sunk with downright confusion) was hardly disconcerted during the whole visit.

June 10.-----I do really think my good mother grows so fond of Mr. Faulkland, that if he goes on at this rate, he will get the start even of Sir George in her affections---
 ‘ Mr. Faulkland said so and so ; Mr. *Faulk-*
 ‘ *land* is of opinion ; and I am sure you will
 ‘ allow Mr. *Faulkland* to be a good judge of
 ‘ such and such things.’

To say the truth, the man improves upon you every hour you know him. And yet I have discovered in him some of those little (and they are *but* little) alloys to his many good qualities, which Sir George told me of. The interest I may one day have in him makes me a closer observer than I should otherwise be. There *is* that fly turn to ridicule

cule which my brother mentioned ; yet to do him justice, he never employs it, but where it is deserved ; and then too with so much vivacity and good humour, that one cannot be angry with him.

We had a good deal of company at dinner with us to day ; amongst the rest, young Sayers, who is returned from his travels, as *he* calls it. You remember he went away a good humoured, inoffensive, quiet fool ; he has brought no one ingredient of that character back with him but the last ; for such a stiff, conceited, overbearing, talkative, impertinent coxcomb, does not exist. His mother, who, poor woman, you know originally made a simpleton of the boy, contributes now all in her power to finish the fop ; and she carries him about with her every where for a show. We were assembled in the drawing-room before dinner : in *burst* (for it was not a common entry) Master Sayers, and his mama, the cub handing in the old lady—*So* stiff, and *so* awkward, and *so* ungrateful, and *so* *very* unlike Mr. Faulkland, that I pitied the poor thing, who thought that every body would admire him as much as his mother did. After he had been presented to the ladies (for it was the first time we had seen him since he came home), he took a turn or two about the room, to exhibit his person : then applying himself

himself to a picture which hung over the door (a fine landscape of Claude Lorrain, which Mr. Faulkland himself had brought over and given to Sir George), he asked my brother, in a tone scarce articulate, whether we had any *painters* in England? My mother, who by chance heard him, and by greater chance understood him, answered, before Sir George had time, *Painters*, Sir! yes, sure, and some very good ones too; why, you cannot have forgot *that*; it is not much above a year since you went abroad, (for you must know he had been recalled upon the death of an uncle, who had left him his estate). I observed Mr. Faulkland constrained a very sly laugh, on account both of the *manner* of my mother's taking his question, and her innocently-undesigned reprimand. Sayers pretended not to hear her, but looking through his fingers, as if to throw the picture into perspective, that is a pretty good piece, said ~~he~~ he, for a copy. Oh! cry'd his mother, there is no pleasing *you*—people who have been *abroad* are such connoisseurs in painting—No body making an immediate answer, Mr. Faulkland stepped up to Mr. Sayers, and with such a roguish humility in his countenance, that you would have sworn he was a very ignoramus, aid, 'Are you of opinion, Sir that that picture is nothing but a copy?' Nothing more,

more, take my word for it, Sir : When I was at Rome, there was a Dutchman there who made it his business to take copies of copies, which he dispersed, and had people to sell for him in different parts, at pretty good prices ; and they did mighty well ; for very few people *know* a picture ; and I'll answer for it there are not many masters of eminence, but what have a hundred originals palmed upon them, more than ever they painted in their lives.

Mr. Faulkland then proceeded to ask him abundance of questions, which any one, who did not know him well, would have thought he proposed for no other end but a desire of information ; and the poor coxcomb Sayers plumed himself upon displaying so much travelled knowledge, to a wondering ignorant Englishman, who had never been out of his own country. The company were divided into little chattering parties, as is usual when people are whiling away half an hour before dinner. Mrs. Sayers, my mother, and I, were sitting together on a couch, near enough to hear the conversation that passed between the two gentlemen ; at least as much as was not sunk in the affected, half-pronounced sentences of Mr. Sayers. His mother, to whom he was the principal object of attention in the company, seemed mightily pleased at the opportunity

opportunity her son had, from the inquisitiveness of Mr. Faulkland (whom she did not know) of shewing his taste in the polite arts, and often looked about to observe if any body else attended to them, My dear literal woman! (as I often call her to you) took every thing seriously, and whispered to me, how pretty that is, Sidney! how condescending in Mr. Faulkland! you see he does not make a parade of his *own* knowledge in these matters, but is pleased to reap the benefit of other people's. I, who saw the latent roguery, could hardly contain myself. Indeed I was amazed at Mr. Faulkland's grave inquisitive face, and was very glad my mother did not find him out.

Sayers, elated with having shone so conspicuously (for he observed that both my mother and I attended to his discourse) proceeded to shew away with an immensity of vanity and frothy chat, beginning every new piece of history with, 'When *I* was at Rome, or when *I* was Paris'—at last, unluckily for him, speaking of an incident (which made a good deal of noise, and happened at the first mentioned place) in which two English gentlemen had been concerned, he said it was about eleven months ago, just before he left Rome. My mother, who had heard Mr. Faulkland relate the same story,

story, but with some very different circumstances, immediately said, Mr. Faulkland, have I not heard you speak of that? you were at Rome yourself when the affair happened; and if I be not mistaken, it was through your interest with the cardinal of — that the business was made up.

If a spectre had appeared to poor Sayers, he could not have looked more aghast. He dropped his visage half-way down his breast, and for the *first* time speaking very *plain*, and very loud too, with a stare of astonishment, Have *you* been at *Rome*, Sir? I was there for a little time, Sir, answered Mr. Faulkland, with real modesty; for he pitied the mortified buzzard; and I know the story was *represented* as you have told it; the circumstances differed in a few particulars, but the facts were nearly as you have related them.

How obligingly did he reconcile the out-of-countenance Sayers to himself and to the company? Were you long abroad, pray Sir, said the coxcomb? About five years, Sir, answered Mr. Faulkland; but I perceive, by the conversation I have had the honour of holding with you to-day, that many accurate and curious observations escaped me, which you made in a much shorter space of time; for the communication of which I think myself extremely obliged to you.

you. Whether the poor soul thought him serious (as my mother did) I cannot tell; he made him a bow, however, for the compliment; but was so lowered, that he did not say a word more of Rome or Paris for the rest of the day: and in this we had a double advantage; for as we had nothing else to talk of, his mouth was effectually stopped, except when Mr. Faulkland, out of compassion, asked him (as he often did) such questions as he thought he could answer, without exposing his ignorance: for he was contented to have enjoyed it in their tête à tête, and was far from wishing the company to be witnesses of it.

I think such a bagatelle may give you some idea of this man's turn. I told it to Sir George; he laughed heartily, and said it was *so* like him! My mother loves even his faults, though *she* will not allow me to call them by that name.

July 4. — You are unkind, Cecilia, and do not do justice to my sincerity, when you say, *you are sure I am in love with Mr. Faulkland*. If I were, can you conceive it possible that I would deny it to you? Ah! my sister, must I suspect *you* of wanting candour by your making a charge of dissimulation against your friend? Indeed, Cecilia, if I *am* in love with him, I do not yet know it myself. I will repeat it to you, I think

him

him the most amiable of men, and should certainly give him the preference, if I were left to a free choice, over all the rest of his sex; at least all that I have ever yet seen; though possibly there *may* be handsomer, wiser, better men, but they have not fallen within my observation. I am not however so prepossessed in his favour, as to suppose him a phoenix; and if any unforeseen event were to prevent my being his, I am sure I should bear it, and behave very handsomely.

And yet perhaps this may be only bragging like a coward, because I think a very short time will put it out of the power of fortune to divide us. Yet certain as the event of our marriage appears to me at present, I still endeavour to keep a sort of guard over my wishes, and will not give my heart leave to center *all* its happiness in him; and therefore I cannot rank myself amongst the first-rate lovers, who have, neither eyes, nor ears, nor sensations but for one object. *This*, Mr. Faulkland says, is his case, in regard to me. But I think we women should not love at such a rate, till *duty* makes the passion a virtue; and till *that* becomes my case, I am so much a philosopher in love, that I am determined not to let it absorb any of the other cordial affections,

affections, which I owe to my relations and my friends.

I think we ought always to form some laws to ourselves for the regulation of our conduct : without this what an impertinent dream must the life be of almost every young person of our sex ? You, my dear, though with an uncommon understanding of your own, have always been entirely conducted by your wise parents ; and in this I make it my boast to have followed your example. I have been accustomed from my infancy to pay an implicit obedience to the best of mothers ; the conforming to this never yet cost me an uneasy minute, and I am sure never will.

July 5.—A little incident happened to-day, which pleased my mother wonderfully. She had been at morning prayers (as you know is her daily custom) ; when returning home in her chair, one of the men happened to slip his foot, and fell down just before Mr. Faulkland's house. He was so much hurt, that he could go no farther ; and the footman immediately opening the chair, told her she had better step into Mr. Faulkland's, till he called another, or got a man to assist in carrying her home.' One of Mr. Faulkland's servants happened to be standing at the door ; so that, without any previous notice, she was immediately conducted into

a parlour, where Mr. Faulkland was sitting at breakfast. She found with him two pretty little children at his knee, to one of whom he had given some cake; and the elder of the two, a boy of about five years old, he was gravely lecturing, though with great gentleness, for having told a lie. My mother asked him, with some surprize, whose children those were? He smiled, and told her they were his coachman's; and then ordered the footman to carry them down, bidding the little boy be sure to remember what he had said to him.

My mother enquired, if he permitted them to be in the house? He said, he did; and had been induced to do it from the distress he had seen their poor father in, a few days before. He is an honest careful fellow, continued Mr. Faulkland, and has lived in my family from a boy. He was married to a good sort of a body, who took great care of these children, and helped to maintain them decently by her work. The poor woman died in childbed last week; and the person who attended her in her illness (for she had no servant) took that opportunity of robbing the lodgings; and after plundering the poor creature of every thing that was worth carrying away, locked up those two children, whom you saw with me,

me, and the new-born infant, with the corpse of their mother.

The poor little wretches continued in that dismal situation all night, having cried themselves to sleep, without being heard, though there were some other people in the house. The morning following I happened to make an early visit in the neighbourhood of this distressed little family, and my coachman, who was a very affectionate husband and father, took that opportunity of calling on his wife, whom he had not been able to see for three days. The cries of his children (now awake and almost starved) obliged him hastily to break open the room door, where the poor fellow was shocked with the dismal spectacle of his wife lying breathless in her bed, the infant almost expiring at her side, and the other two poor little famished creatures calling to their dead mother for bread.

The sight almost deprived the man of his senses. He snatched up his two eldest children in his arms, and ran raving to the house where I was; tearing his hair like a madman. He told me his mournful story; with which I was so affected, that I ordered one of my footmen to carry the two children home to my house directly, and desired their father to look out for some body to take care of the young one; which he soon did.

The

The honest poor fellow was delighted, when he came home, to find his two children well and merry; for they were sensible of no want but their food. But his grief returned on him with great violence at the thoughts of his being obliged to put them into the hands of people, who, he said, he was sure would not be so kind to them as their own poor mother had been; and my man told me he did nothing but kiss them, and cry over them the whole day. To make his mind easy at once, I let him know they should remain here under his own eye, 'till they were old enough to be put to school; and accordingly directed my house-keeper to see that they were taken care of; which has made their father very happy.

The little rogues have found their way up to me, and I love some times to hear them prattle; but this morning the eldest having told me a lye of his brother, I was checking him for it when you came in.

My mother was so pleased with Mr. Faulkland's conduct in this little history, that she repeated it to me word for word as soon as she came home, and concluded with observing, how *good a creature* Mr. Faulkland must be, who in so tender a manner interested himself in his poor servant's misfortune. Most young gentlemen, said she, would

would have thought they had done enough in giving the servant money to have provided for his children how he could : it is in such trifles as these that we often discover the excellence of the heart.

You will suppose, my dear, that I am not displeased at any circumstance that can raise Mr. Faulkland's character in my pious mother's esteem. I heard the story with great pleasure ; but not making any comments on it, Sir George (who was present at the relation), said, Well, Sidney, you are either very affected, or the greatest stoic in the world ; why, any other girl would be in raptures at such a proof of the honest tenderness of that heart which she knows she possesses entirely, and on which the whole of her future happiness depends. I am very sensible of Mr. Faulkland's worth, brother, I replied, and I can feel without being transported. I will be hanged, said Sir George, if I think you love Faulkland, at least not half as well as he deserves ; and I dare swear you have not been honest enough to tell him yet whether you do or not. It is time enough for that, I replied ; if Mr. Faulkland and I should be married, I hope I shall give him no cause to complain of my want of affection.

If you marry, said my brother ! I know of no possible *ifs*, unless they are of your
own

own making. I know of none neither, answered my mother ; yet I think Sidney is in the right to be doubtful about all human events, Many things, added she gravely, (for she has a great veneration for old sayings), fall out between the cup and the lip.

I think, mother, said Sir George, bluntly, *you* were disappointed in your *first* love ; I have heard *you* speak of it, but I forget the circumstances. As I had never heard my mother make any mention of this particular, I begged she would oblige me with relating it.

When I was about one-and twenty, daughter, said she, a match was concluded by my father between me and a very fine gentleman. I loved him, and (as I suppose all young women do in the like circumstances) believed myself equally beloved by him. The courtship had been of a year's standing ; for you must know I was not very easily won. Every thing was settled, and the day appointed for our marriage arrived ; when, instead of the bridegroom, whom we every minute expected, there came a letter from him directed to me. The contents were, that having formerly been engaged to a young lady by the most solemn vows, he had, unfortunately for them both, forgot them all on seeing me, and had broke through every obligation divine and human
to

to obtain me. He intreated mine, and my family's pardon, in the most pathetic manner, for having engaged our esteem so far as to consent to an union, of which he found himself unworthy, and which it was impossible for him to accomplish ; for, said he, the wrongs I have done the woman, whose youth I seduced, rise to my imagination with so much horror, that, for the empire of the world, I would not complete my guilt, by devoting that hand to another, to which she only has a right. He enlarged greatly on the sufferings of his heart, in the struggle between his love for me, and his duty to the person who had his vows ; and whom, he declared, his infidelity had almost brought to the grave. He claimed my pity, both on his own and her account ; and repeatedly intreated my forgiveness of his fault.

The whole letter, which was very long, was so expressive of a mind overwhelmed with despair, that I was exceedingly shocked at the reading of it. What could I say ? The plea he offered for his seemingly strange conduct, was too just to admit of any objections. I own the disappointment afflicted me, but I bore it with a becoming resolution. My family were at first exceedingly exasperated against my doubly unfaithful lover ; but, upon enquiring into the
the

the facts, they found the truth to be as he had represented it. The conclusion was, that, upon the very day on which he was to have been married to me, and on which he had writ me that gloomy letter, he was seized with a melancholy, which increasing on him daily, soon after ended in absolute madness, and he was obliged to be confined for the remainder of his life. The young lady lived but a short time after the melancholy fate of her lover, and died, as it was said, of a broken heart.

It was a great comfort to me to reflect that my fate disposed otherwise of me than to this unhappy gentleman; for I am very sure, had these fatal events happened in consequence of my marriage with him, that I should never have survived it.

This extraordinary anecdote of my mother's life, which I had never had a hint of before (for she could not speak of it without great emotion), very much affected me. Sir George said, the story was more tragical than he had apprehended, and told my mother, *that* was an accident which fell out between the cup and the lip, with a vengeance.

My mother continued thoughtful for a good while; and I was sorry that the memory of this melancholy story had been re-

vived: but Sir George talked and laughed us both into spirits again.

July 6. ——— This Mr. Faulkland is a princely man; he has sent me *such* a set of jewels! My mother says they are too fine for a private gentlewoman; but George tells her they are not a bit too fine for Mr. Faulkland's *wife*, and only suitable to his fortune. You know I have but few of my own, those only which were my mother's when she was a maiden. The greatest part of her's, and by much the finest, were presented to her by my father; but those she reserves for Sir George, against the time of his marriage, as a present for his lady; for they are family jewels.

July 8. ——— My probation is over, my Cecilia.—The formidable question has been put to me, and I have answered it—Ay marry, say you, but how? In the *negative*, to be sure, my dear—No, no, my Cecilia; a valuable (psha! what an affected cold word that is), a lovely and most worthy man, with six thousand pounds a year, is a prize that a country girl must not expect to draw every day. Mr. Faulkland, in *lover-like* phrase, demanded from me the time of his destined happiness: I referred him to my mother. She, good and delicate as she is, referred him back to Sir George. George blurted out some sudden day that
startled

startled us both, when Mr. Faulkland reported it to us. I stammered out something; my mother hesitated; Sir George came in, and blundered at us all; so I think we compounded for the time, and amongst us fixed upon this day month——And full soon enough, says my Cecilia: you have known the man but about six weeks, and surely a month is as little time as you can take, in preparing fineries. True, my girl, true; but it is all George's doings. Indeed, my Cecilia, without affectation, I had much rather have had a longer day; though I think I *know* the man as well in those six weeks, as if I had been acquainted with him so many years; for he has spent most of his hours with us every day during that time; and my mother says he is one of those in *whom there is no guile*.

Sir George is downright insolent; he declares I am not sensible of my own happiness, and that I deserve to be married to some little petty Wiltshire 'squire. He so piques himself upon making this match, there is no bearing him. He has taken all matters of settlement upon himself, and insists on my mother's not interposing. She acquiesces, but charges my brother not to let Mr. Faulkland's generosity carry him too far, and bids him remember what is due to his friend, as well as to his sister.

July 10.——I really begin to be hurried. My mother, you know, is exactly punctilious in every thing. Such a quantity of things *are* bought, and such a quantity to be bought, that there is no end of journies into the city. Then milliners and mantua-makers!——One would think I was going to pass the remainder of my life in a remote country, where there were no kind of manufactures or artificers to become at, and that I was to provide cloathing for half a century.

July 12.——I have much upon my hands, and Sir George is so impatient, and troublesome, that I believe I must employ an amanuensis, to give a minute detail of all our foppery; for I shall not have patience to do it myself.

July 17.——Sir George has often told me, that he knows of no fault Mr. Faulkland has, but a violence of temper when provoked. I saw an instance of it to-day, which I was sorry for, and the more so, as I was in some measure accessary to it. Mr. Faulkland, my brother, a lady of our acquaintance, and myself, took a ride in Hide-park this morning. We were to dine at Kensington (where my mother was to meet us), at the house of the lady (a relation of Mr. Faulkland's), who was with us.

We

We rode into the stable-yard of her house, in order to alight. My horse which happened to be a young one that Sir George had newly bought, saw some object that made him shy of advancing, and he turned suddenly about. A footman of Mr. Faulkland's, who chanced to stand just behind me, very imprudently, though I am sure without design of harm, gave him a stroke with his whip, which made the animal plunge and throw me, as I had not time to recover my seat from the first short turn he made. I luckily received not the least hurt, and was on my feet in an instant. But Mr. Faulkland, who had leaped off his horse even before I fell, was so enraged at the fellow, that he gave him too or three sound lashes with his whip across the shoulders, which fell on him as quick as lightning. I am inclined to think the servant was not sober; for he had the insolence to lay hold of his master's whip, and muttered an oath or two. Mr. Faulkland's attention being quickly turned to me, he took no farther notice of the man. We went into the house; and after I had assured them all I was not in the least hurt, I begged of Mr. Faulkland to forgive the footman, who had undesignedly caused the accident. He made a thousand apologies, for having let his anger so far

transport him, as to chastise his servant in a manner he was not used to do ; but the peril he put me into, madam addressing himself to me, made me forget myself. I repeated, I hope, Sir, you have forgiven him. I wish, my dear Miss Bidulph, said he, that the fellow were guilty of no other fault but this, that I might shew you my readiness to obey you ; but he is such an intolerable sot, that there is no keeping him with safety. I have forgiven him several idle things ; but as I had determined to part with him before this happened, I hope you will be so good as not to insist on my retaining him. I could not intercede for the foolish fellow after this ; so said no more.

This little incident convinces me that Mr. Faulkland is of too warm a temper ; yet I am not alarmed at the discovery ; you know I am the very reverse ; and I hope in time, by gentle methods, in some measure to subdue it in Mr. Faulkland. His own good sense and good nature must incline him to wish it corrected. My brother says he has often lamented this vice of his nature to him, and said he had taken infinite pains to get the better of it ; and had so far succeeded, that he seldom was surprized by it, but on very sudden and extraordinary occasions ;
such

such as, I suppose, he looked upon this to be, which I have related.

We passed the day delightfully at Kensington, and did not return to town till late. I think I have got cold, as we walked a long time in the gardens.

July 13.——I have got an ugly sore throat; my mother insists on my being let blood; I am afraid of alarming her by complaining, though I had very little rest all night. Mr. Faulkland came early this morning to enquire after my health: my mother told him I was not well. How tenderly dejected were his looks, when I came into the room. Sir George made him stay to breakfast; he scarce tasted any thing; he was quite cast down. My brother rallied him (I thought it unseasonable) on the chance he had the day before of his losing his wife. Mr. Faulkland answered, I wish I had followed the first motion of my thoughts, and discharged that wicked fellow a month ago. Sir George said, as it happened, there had been no harm done; but he thought Mr. Faulkland would do well to dismiss such an insolent rogue from his service. He has saved me that trouble, said Mr. Faulkland, he has dismissed himself; but took care first to rob me. To rob you! we all repeated in the same breath. Yes, said Mr. Faulkland: I told him, after I got home, that he was

to deliver up such things as he had in his charge to my own man, as I meant to discharge him in the morning. He made me no reply, for he was a sullen fellow; but when the family were asleep, he contrived to pick the lock of a bureau in my dressing room, where I sometimes keep money. I believe what induced him to it was, his having seen me yesterday morning, when I was going to ride, (a precaution which I generally use), put my pocket book into this place, and I suppose he concluded there were bank notes in it, for he took *that* (I presume without staying to examine it) and all the money he could find besides, and very cleverly made his escape out of a back window, which was found open this morning.

My mother lectured Mr. Faulkland a little, for suffering a servant, whose fidelity he was not sure of, to see where he deposited his money; which, she said, might prove a temptation to one, who was *not* so ill inclined as this man. Mr. Faulkland acknowledged it was careless in him; but said, in his own justification, he had been accustomed to very honest people about him, which rendered him less suspicious.

He appeared so anxious and unhappy about my indisposition, that I affected to make as light of it as possible; though indeed I find myself very much out of order.

With

With what a kind sorrow did he observe my looks; sighs now and then stole from him, as his eyes were fixed on my face. I am obliged to him, yet I think I should be as much concerned for *him*, if he were ill.

Here is a whole cargo of silks and laces just sent in to me—Heigh-ho! I can't look at them—I am not well—and I have such a gantlope to run of visiting and racketting, that the thought makes me sicker.

July 27.—After 2 fortnight's, a dreadful fortnight's intermission, I reassume my pen. I have often told you, Cecilia, I was not born to be happy. Oh! I prophesied when I said so, though I knew not why I said it.

I will try to recollect all the circumstances of this miserable interval, and relate them as well as I can. The last line in my journal (which I have not yet ventured to send you, as your stay at Paris is so uncertain) informs you that I was ill. I was let blood; but my disorder increased, and I was in a high fever before next morning. I remember what my reflections were, and am sure my apprehensions of death were not on my *own* account afflicting, but grievously so at the thoughts of what those should feel whom I was to leave behind.

My mother and Mr. Faulkland, I believe, chiefly engaged my mind; but I did not long continue capable of reflection. The violence of my disorder deprived me of my senses on the fourth day, and they tell me I raved of Mr. Faulkland. I remember nothing, but that, in my intervals of reason, I always saw my poor mother in tears by my bedside. I was in the utmost danger, but it pleased God to restore me to the ardent prayers of my dear parent. In about ten days I began to shew some symptoms of amendment, and enquired how Mr. Faulkland did. My mother answered, he is well, my dear, and gone out of town, but I believe will return in a day or two. Gone out of town, said I, and leave my dying! Indeed that was not kind of Mr. Faulkland, and I shall tell him so. My mother was sitting on the bedside, and had hold of my hand; my brother was standing with his back to the fire place. I observed they looked at one another, but neither made me any answer. Pray, Sir George, I cried, would you serve the woman so whom you were so near making your wife? My brother was going to reply, but my mother frowned at him; he looked displeased, and went out of the room. Dear madam, said I, there is something the matter with Mr. Faulkland; don't keep me in suspense. *I know* there is something, which you and my brother would

would conceal from me. Is Mr. Faulkland sick? not that I know of I assure you, answered my mother; he was well yesterday, for we had a message from him to enquire after your health, as we have had every day, for he is but at Richmond; and you know if he were in town, he could receive no other satisfaction than hearing from you, as you are too ill to admit of any visits. My mother rang the bell immediately, and asked me to take something; I saw she wanted to turn the conversation. My maid Ellen came into the room, and I asked no more questions.

My mother staid with me till it was time for her to go to rest; but avoided mentioning Mr. Faulkland's name, or giving me any opportunity of doing it; for she tenderly conjured me to keep myself quite composed, and not to talk. The doctor assured her this night that he thought me out of danger; and she retired with looks of cordial delight.

She was no sooner gone, than I called Ellen to my bedside, and charged her to tell me all she knew concerning Mr. Faulkland. The poor girl looked concerned, and seemed to study for an answer. Lord bless me, madam! what should I know of him more than my lady has told you? When did you see him, said I? Not for several days, she answered. Where is he? At Richmond, I heard

heard Sir George say ; but I suppose he will come to town as soon as he hears you are well enough to receive him. I caught hold of her hand ; ‘ Ellen, I know there is something, relative to Mr. Faulkland, which which you all want to hide from me ; don’t attempt to deceive me ; you may be sure, whatever it be, I must soon be informed of it ; in the mean while, my doubts make me very unhappy.’

The good-natured girl’s trouble and confusion increased as I spoke : my dear madam, she replied, when you are better, my lady will tell you all : ‘ No, no, Ellen, I must know it now ; tell it me this minute, or you must never expect to see me better under such uncertainty. What is the *all*, the frightful *all*, that I am to be told ? How you have shocked me with that little word !’ I know nothing, madam, answered Ellen, but what I gathered from Sir George’s loud angry talk with my lady ; and I should be undone if her ladyship were to know I mentioned it to you. I assured her my mother should not know it. Why then, madam, (speaking lower,) I am afraid that Mr. Faulkland has misbehaved, or has been belied to my lady---She stopped at this---How ? how ? cried I eagerly ; what, has she heard of him ? something of another courtship, she replied ; but I hope it is all false---You
trifle

trifle with me---speak out and say all you know. The poor creature started at my impatience: ‘ I know no more, madam, ‘ than that I heard my lady say to Sir George, ‘ I had rather Sidney were in her grave, ‘ than married to him. Sir George said, ‘ but why will you not let Mr. Faulkland ‘ justify himself, madam? justify himself! ‘ my lady answered; what can he say? is it ‘ not plain that he is false to another woman? ‘ they talked lower; but at last Sir George ‘ raised his voice, and said, he would give ‘ half his estate to have the villain punished ‘ —All this, madam, I over-heard by ‘ mere accident. Sir George was going ‘ abroad; his linen was lying ready for him ‘ in his dressing-room; and his man desired ‘ me to put a stitch in one of his master’s ‘ point ruffles which was a little ripped in the ‘ gathering. I had come up the back stairs ‘ into the dressing-room, just as my lady ‘ (who was with Sir George in the bed- ‘ chamber) said the words I first repeated, ‘ and while I stood doing the ruffle, I heard ‘ the rest. There was a great deal more ‘ said, but I could not distinguish any thing ‘ besides, except a word here and there, ‘ which Sir George seemed to speak in a ‘ very angry tone. This was the second ‘ day of your illness. Mr. Faulkland had ‘ been here in the morning to enquire how ‘ you

‘ you did ; my lady saw him, and I thought
‘ they parted very friendly. I met Mr.
‘ Faulkland coming down stairs ; he looked
‘ full of grief ; my lady stood at the dining-
‘ room door, and wished him a good morn-
‘ ing. About an hour after came a letter
‘ directed to you ; it was brought by a por-
‘ ter, who said it required no answer. As
‘ you were too ill to read it, I gave it to my
‘ lady ; and it was soon after this, that I
‘ heard the conversation between Sir George
‘ and her ladyship. Mr. Faulkland came
‘ again in the evening. Sir George was not
‘ at home ; but my lady had him above an
‘ hour in the drawing-room ; and the foot-
‘ man, who let him out, said, he looked as
‘ if he were in sad trouble. He has never
‘ been here since, but sends constantly every
‘ day to know how you do. My lady or-
‘ dered me, if any letters came for you, to
‘ deliver them to her. And has there any
‘ come to me ? No, madam ; word was al-
‘ ways sent to Mr. Faulkland of your being
‘ so ill, that to be sure he thought it would
‘ be in vain for him to write to you.’

This was all I could gather from the maid.
What a night did I pass ? I scarce closed my
eyes. Ellen lay in a field-bed by me ; she
had watched several nights, and I obliged
her now to undress and go into bed. She
slept soundly ; how I envied her tranquillity !

If

If I forgot myself for a few minutes, my slumbers were distracted, and I started at the recollection of what I had already heard, and the dread of what I had *still* to hear. Mr. Faulkland absenting himself from the house so long; my mother wishing me in the grave, rather than be his wife; my brother denouncing vengeance on the *villain*! These were the terrible ideas that haunted me till morning. What can he have done, I cried aloud several times? I summoned to my aid all the fortitude I was mistress of, and resolved not to sink under the calamity, be it of what nature it would.

My mother, ever kind and tender, came early the next morning into my room. She enquired after my health, and looked as if she *pitied* me. I was ready to cry at her compassionate glances; they mortified me, but I was determined not to let her perceive it. I told her I was much better; and, what is surprising, I was really so, notwithstanding the uneasy state of my mind. She talked of indifferent things, and said, she hoped I should soon be able to go into the country for a few days, to recover a little strength. I answered, I hope so too, madam. We were both silent for a while; my mother had her indulgent eyes fixed upon me; mine were cast down: at last I resolved to speak out. Madam, said I, looking steadfastly at

at her, what is the cause of your coldness towards Mr. Faulkland? its in vain for you to hide it longer; you say he is *well*, and gone out of town. If he has shewn any slight towards me, tell me so at once; and do not entertain so mean an opinion of your daughter, as to suppose she cannot bear the news. Your tenderness, I see, would conceal *something* from me; but believe me, madam, I am prepared for the worst.

My dear, replied my mother, it gives me great pleasure to hear you say so. I pray God preserve my child, and grant her a better lot than she could hope for in a union with Mr. Faulkland. What has he done, madam? my dearest Sidney, this is the first trial you have ever had of your patience; but I have no doubt that your goodness and discretion will teach you to act as becomes your character.

I did not intend to have spoken to you on the subject, 'till you were better able to bear the knowledge of what I am going to acquaint you with; but your prudence, I think, makes you equal to every thing; and I hope your health will not be endangered by the discovery of Mr. Faulkland's baseness. (What a dreadful preface!)

The day after you were taken ill, a letter, directed to you, was brought hither by a porter, which your maid (very discreetly) delivered

delivered to me. As you were not in a condition to read it yourself, I thought proper to open it. The cover contained a few lines addressed to you; and in it was inclosed a letter directed to Mr. Faulkland. Good God, added she, taking the papers out of her pocket, how little reliance ought we to have on a fair out-side!

Here are the letters; read what is in the cover first. I did so; it was ill writ and worse spelt. These were the contents:

Madam,

I hear you are soon to be married to Mr. Faulkland; but as I think it a great pity that so virtuous a young Lady should be thrown away, this is to inform you, that he does not deserve you.

The inclosed letter, wrote to him by a fine and beautiful young lady that he decoyed, shews you how false he is. When you tax him with it, he will know from whence you got your information; but let him deny it if he can.

I am, madam,

Your unknown friend,

and humble servant.

The letter to Mr. Faulkland, in a very pretty female hand, and the date but a week old (from the time it was sent to me) was as follows:

“ Oh!

“ Oh! Mr. Faulkland, I am the most unfortunate woman in the world. Fatal have you been to me, and I am undone for ever—I was in hopes that our mutual fault might have been concealed; for while we stayed at Bath, I kept my aunt entirely ignorant of what passed between us, though she often pressed me to confess the truth; but it can now no longer be concealed. I am but too sensibly reminded of the unhappy consequences of my own weakness, and your ungoverned (would I could call it) love. I never meant to trouble you with complaints; but my present condition calls loudly for your compassion. Are you then really going to be married? There wants but this to complete my destruction! Oh! Sir, before it is too late, take pity on me! I dare not continue in the house with my uncle much longer. My aunt says, that, when my affliction becomes so conspicuous as not to be any longer hid, she will form a pretence, on account of my health, for me to be absent for some months, under colour of going to Bath, or to London, for better advice than I can have here. But what will this avail me? I have no relations, no friends, nor acquaintance, that I can trust with the secret of my miserable situation. To whom then can I fly, but to you, the cause of all my sorrow? I beseech you for heaven’s sake, write to me,
and

and tell me, if indeed you are going to give yourself away for ever! If you are, your intended bride, perhaps, may have no other advantage of me, but what you in an evil hour deprived me of. Write to me, dear, though cruel as you are; and think of some place of refuge for your unhappy

A. B."

When I had read these letters, my mother asked me, what I thought of Mr. Faulkland? indeed, I was so astonished, that I scarce knew what answer to make; but replied, madam, are you satisfied, that this letter is not forged, with a design to injure Mr. Faulkland? Ah! my dear, said she, I am sorry you strive to catch at so slender a twig; you may be sure I am but too well convinced that the letter is genuine, or you should never have had a moment's uneasiness by the knowledge of it. Mr. Faulkland himself does not deny it, and it is with his permission that I kept it. I promised to return it, but desired leave to retain it for a few days. He could not refuse me this, tho' he might easily imagine I designed to shew it to you. That, indeed, *was* my intention, when I desired to keep it a little while in my hands, and I did so, that I might have your judgment on the letter itself, as well as fully to justify my own proceedings in what I have done. Ah! dear madam, cry'd I, scarce knowing

knowing what I said, I rely on your material goodness; I am sure you have done what is proper. Yet has Mr. Faulkland nothing to say for himself?—But I will ask no more questions—I know too much already—My love, said my mother, you have a right to know every thing relative to this affair.

I shewed the letters to your brother, as soon as I received them. Sir George at first seemed quite confounded, but afterwards, to my very great surprize, he smiled and said, he knew of that foolish business before. I asked him, if he knew of him before, how he could answer it to his honour, his conscience, or the love he ought to bear his sister, not to divulge it immediately? Why, said he, I assure you it is a *trivial* affair, that ought not to make you uneasy.

What, George! answered I, a trivial matter for a man to ruin a fine young lady, forsake her, and dare to involve an innocent creature in his crimes! Do you call this a *trivial* affair? If you knew the *circumstances*, said he, you would not view it in so disadvantageous a light. Faulkland certainly gained the affections of a young lady, tho' without seeking to do so; he never courted her, never attempted to please her, much less to win her heart, and least of all to ruin her virtue. I know that is an action he is
not

not capable of committing. How comes it to pass then that he *did* so, said I, interrupting him? Why, the girl was silly, and she was thrown in his way by a vile designing woman that had the care of her. 'And ' was he (again stopping him) to take ' advantage of her folly, and join with that ' *vile designing* woman, to destroy a poor ' young creature's honour?' The *best* men, said he, confidently, may fall into an error; and if you expect to find a man entirely free from them, you look for what is not possible in human nature.

I may expect to find a man without flagrant crimes to answer for, I hope; and I believe I spoke it with warmth. Do you call *this* one, madam, said he, with still more assurance? I hope Sidney will not be such a chit as to think in this manner, when she comes to hear the affair explained. I really grew down-right angry, and could not forbear saying, I would rather see you married to your grave than to such a man. Your brother then begged I would hear Mr. Faulkland *justified*, and be a little cool 'till that was done. I told him there was a terrible fact alledged, of which I could not conceive it possible for him to acquit himself.

George said, he had a letter to shew me on the subject, which he had received from Mr. Faulkland while he was at Bath, and
which

which he was sure would convince me, that the whole affair was so trifling, it ought by no means to be objected to Mr. Faulkland, nor, in his opinion, even mentioned to him.

I told him I was sorry to find that he and I thought so differently; for that I was determined to speak to Mr. Faulkland immediately about it, and, if he could not satisfy me entirely on the score of the injured lady, that he must never think of Sidney more.

Your brother said, that the letter which was sent to you had come from the revengeful dog who had robbed his master, and that he would give half his estate to have the villain punished as he deserved. Mr. Faulkland, it seems, had told him this himself. The fellow found it in the pocket-book which he had taken out of the escrutore, and his disappointment, perhaps, at not getting a better booty, (for he found but twenty *moidores* besides,) joined to his malice against his master, incited him to make the use he did of this letter. Now, continued my mother, though the fellow is undoubtedly a vile creature, yet, my dear, I think *we* are obliged to him for this discovery, providentially as it has come, to save you from what, in my opinion, would be the worst of misfortunes.

The loss of this letter had alarmed Mr. Faulkland so much, that he put an advertisement

tisement into the papers next day, worded in so particular a manner, as shewed how very fearful he was of that letter's coming to light; for, no doubt, he suspected the man might make a dangerous use of it. The advertisement said, that if the servant, who had absconded from his master's house in St. James's Square the night before, would restore the papers which he took with him, they should be received without any questions being asked, and a reward of twenty guineas paid to any person who should bring them back. This advertisement, which, to be sure, the fellow either did not see at all, or had not time enough to avail himself of it, shews you to what sad resources people are driven, who, having done unwarrantable actions, are often in the power of the lowest wretches. I own this circumstance gave me a very ill impression of Mr. Faulkland. Your brother says, he remembers this man was one of the servants he took with him to Bath, and without doubt, he knew of his amour. The advertisement has since been changed, by Sir George's advice. I find the man is named, his person described, and a reward of fifty pounds offered for the apprehending him; but I take it for granted he has got out of reach.

Though

Though this little digression was very pertinent, I was impatient to know what had passed between my mother and Mr. Faulkland on the fatal subject, and could not forbear asking her.

I shall tell you, said she, in order. Your brother and I had some farther altercations; and indeed, my dear, it amazes me to find, that a young man, educated as Sir George was, in the early part of life, in the strictest principles of virtue, and the son of parents, who, thank God, always gave him the best example, should have so far deviated from the sober paths he was brought up in, as to treat the most glaring vices with a levity that shocked me. But, I suppose, the company he kept abroad, among whom this hypocrite Faulkland was his chief, has quite perverted him. He gave me the letter to read, which he had received from his friend whilst he was at Bath; and which, he said, was to convince me that it was such a *trifling* affair, that we ought not to take the least notice of it. And all his reason for this was, truly, because that loose man treats the subject as lightly as he does. I am afraid Sir George is no better than himself, or he would not have ventured to make him the confidant of his wild amours; and that at a time too when he was encouraged to address you. He tells him of a very pretty young lady (innocent

nocent he says too) that he got acquainted with, who came to Bath under the care of an aunt and uncle; he talks some idle stuff of avoiding her, when he found she liked him, and that the aunt (wicked woman!) contrived to leave them together one evening, when, I understand, the poor young creature fell into the snare that was prepared for her. For, would you believe it, my dear, the monstrous libertine, notwithstanding his pretences, owned that he had paid a price for the girl to her aunt. The betrayed creature herself knew not of this.

I own I had not patience to read the letter through. To say the truth, I but ran my eye in a cursory manner over it; I was afraid of meeting, at every line, something offensive to decency. And *this* was the account, which, in your brother's opinion, was entirely to exculpate Mr. Faulkland. I think I never was so angry. I threw the letter to George with indignation, telling him, I was ashamed to find, that he, after knowing an incident of this kind, had so little regard to the honour of his sister, as to promote a marriage between her and such a rake. He answered, if I kept you unmarried till I found such a man as I should *not* call a rake, you were likely to live and die a maid. That for his part, he was very sorry, as well for Mr. Faulkland's sake as yours, he had ever

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proposed a union, which he found was likely to be overthrown by unseasonable scruples. And the gentleman, in a violent passion, flung out of the room, without deigning even to take up the letter which had fallen on the floor.

I presume he went directly to his friend Faulkland, and told him all that had passed ; for the plausible man came to me in the evening, and with looks, full of pretended sorrow, but *real* guilt, begged I would hear him on the subject of a letter which he said he found had unfortunately prejudiced me against him. To be sure he was prepared, and had, with George's help, contrived an artful story to impose on me. He took me unawares ; but I was resolved not to give him the advantage of arguments, but proceed to ask him a few plain questions. I therefore cut him short at once, by saying, Mr. Faulkland, I am extremely concerned and shocked at what has happened ; I will say but few words to you, and desire to hear nothing more than answers to my questions : he bowed, and remained silent.

I then asked him, taking the young lady's letter out of my pocket, whether that was from the same person, of whom he had written an account to my son whilst he was at Bath ? He answered, it is, madam ; and I hoped from that letter, which I find Sir George

George has shewn you, you would be induced to believe that I never formed a thought of injuring that young lady, till some unfortunate circumstances combined, and suddenly surprized me into the commission of a fault that has made us both unhappy. Sir, said I, I don't pretend to know people's hearts, I can only judge of them from their actions. You acknowledge that she was a fine young woman, and you believe innocent: what excuse can you offer for being her destroyer? dear madam, don't use so severe an expression——Sir, I can use no other: how can you extenuate the fault, by which you merit so severe an appellation? to a lady of your rigid delicacy, madam, said he, perhaps what youth could offer, in extenuation of the fault, might appear but a weak plea: yet 'tis most certain, that I was surprized into the fatal error: I am under no promises, no ties, no engagements whatsoever to the lady. No ties, Sir! (interrupting him) is your own honour no tie upon you, supposing you free from any other obligation? You see the consequence of this fatal error, as you call it: here is a young person, of fashion, perhaps (I don't enquire who she is, but she seems to have had no mean education,) who is likely to bring a child into the world, to the disgrace of herself and her family. On you, Sir, she charges her dishonour, and men-

tions your marrying another, as the blow which is to complete her ruin. Mr. Faulkland, is not all this truth? be so good as to give me a direct answer. Madam, I cannot deny it; you have the proof of it in your hands: from all that appears to you, I am indeed very blameable; nay, I do not pretend to vindicate my folly; but, madam, do not aggravate my fault in your own thoughts, by considering the affair in a more unfavourable light than what even her letter puts it! I conjure you, madam, to suffer Sir George to be my advocate on this occasion; he is acquainted with every particular of the transaction, and can give you a detail that I will not presume to do. Be pleased, Sir, replied I, to tell me what you mean to do in regard to this lady? I mean to do all that I *can* do, answered he; I shall provide a place of retreat for her, where she will meet with the utmost care, tenderness, and respect; and where she may continue with privacy till she is in a condition to return home again to her friends. You may be sure, madam, as to the rest, I shall acquit myself consistently with honour. That is as much as to say, Sir, said I, that you will take care of the maintenance of your poor babe. He looked as if he had a mind to smile, forward man! but constrained it. Doubtless, madam, I

shall

shall do all that is now in my power to do, in every circumstance relating to her.

I felt myself exceedingly displeased with him; I was so disappointed in my opinion of him, that it increased my resentment. Sir, I proceeded, I must inform you, that there is as much *now* in your power as ever there was. You are still unmarried; the way is open to you, to repair the mischief you have done: I will never bring down the curses of an injured maid upon my daughter's head, nor purchase her worldly prosperity at the expence of the shame and sorrow of another woman, for aught I know, as well born, as tenderly bred, and, till she knew you, perhaps as innocent as herself. For heaven's sake, madam, he cry'd, don't, don't, I beseech you, pronounce my fate so hastily—You must pardon me, Sir, said I, if I beg to hear no more on this subject. Sir George has already said every thing you could expect of your friend to say in your justification, and more than became him to utter. All I can find by either you or him, is, that you think the loss of honour to a young woman is a trifle, which a man is not obliged to repair, because truly he did not *promise* to do so. This young creature, I understand, is a gentlewoman, very charming in her person, by your own account; one who loves you tenderly, and will shortly

make you a father. Is not all this so? I grant it, madam, said the criminal. Then, Sir, what reason can you urge in your conscience for not doing her justice? None—but your own inconstant inclinations, which happen now, to be better pleased with another woman, whom, perhaps, you might forsake in a few months.

I cannot pretend to repeat to you all he said upon this last article: words of course, you may be sure. He entreated, over and over again, that I would permit Sir George to plead for him. I told him, that after the facts he had granted, it was impossible that either he or Sir George could make the affair better; that I was very sorry to find myself disappointed in a person of whom I had conceived so high an opinion; and added, that as your illness made it very improper to let you know any thing of the matter for the present, I should take it as a favour, if he would permit me to retain the lady's letter to him for a few days, or till you were in a condition to have the matter broke to you. In the mean while, I requested that he would dispense with my receiving any more visits from him.

He said some frantic things (for the man seems of a violent temper;) but finding me peremptory, took his leave with respect.

I understand

I understand from Sir George, that he flew directly down to Richmond, to a little house he has there, where he has remained ever since; but sends every day to enquire after your health. Sir George, I am sure, sees him often; for he frequently goes out early in the morning, and stays abroad till night. The increase of your illness, from the time I received the last visit from Mr. Faulkland, to such a degree as to alarm us for your life, I suppose, prevented your brother from reassuming the subject; tho' I can perceive he is full of anger and vexation on the occasion. You are now, my dear, God be praised, in a hopeful way of recovery, and I expect that George (who has, by espousing this man's interests so warmly, very much offended me,) that George, I say, will renew his solicitations in his favour. What do you say, my child? I should be glad to know your thoughts, with regard to the part I have acted, as well as with respect to Mr. Faulkland's conduct.

Shall I own my weakness to you, my dear Cecilia? I was ready to melt into tears; my spirits, exhausted by sickness, were not proof against this unexpected blow; a heavy sigh burst from my heart, that gave me a little relief. You know my mother is rigid in her notions of virtue; and I was determined to shew her that I would endeavour to imitate

her. I therefore suppressed the swelling passion in my breast, and with as much composure as I could assume, told her, I thought she acted as became her; and that, with regard to Mr. Faulkland, my opinion of his conduct was such, that I never desired to see him more. This answer, dictated perhaps by female pride (for I will not answer for the feelings of my heart at that instant) was so agreeable to my mother, that she threw her arms about my neck, and kissed me several times; blessing, and calling me by the most endearing names at every interval. Her tenderness overcame me; or, to deal with sincerity, I believe I was willing to make it an excuse for weeping. Oh! my dear mother, cry'd I, I have need of your indulgence; but indeed your goodness quite over-powers me. My dear love, said she, you deserve it all, and more than it is in your mother's power to shew you. What a blessed escape have you had, my sweet child, of that wild man! Little did I think, my Sidney, when I told you the story of my first disappointment, that a case so parallel would soon be your own. With respect to you and me indeed, the incidents are nearly alike; but there is a wide difference between the two men. My lover had the grace to repent, and would have returned to his first engagements, if a dreadful malady had not overtaken

overtaken him; but this graceless Faulkland persists in his infidelity, and would make you as culpable as himself. I own to you, daughter, that the recollection of that melancholy event which happened to me, has given me a sort of horror at the very thoughts of an union between you and Mr. Faulkland. You remember the sad consequences which I related to you of an infidelity of this kind; the poor forsaken woman died of grief, and the dishonest lover ran mad. Think of this, my child, and let it encourage you to banish such an unworthy man from your heart. I was afraid your regard for him might make this a difficult task; but I rejoice to find your virtue is stronger than your passion. I loved as well as you, but I overcame it when I found it a duty to do so; and I see your mother's example is not lost upon you.

The honest pride that my mother endeavoured to inspire me with, had a good effect, and kept up my spirits for a time. She told me, she was sure that Sir George would quarrel with us both, when we came to talk upon the subject of the marriage; but she was entirely easy as to that, now she knew that my sentiments corresponded with her own.

You know my mother has ever been despotic in her government of me; and had I

even been inclined to dissent from her judgement in a matter of this importance, it would have been to no purpose; but this was really far from my thoughts.

I was as much disgusted with Mr. Faulkland as she was, and as heartily pitied the unhappy young creature whom he had undone.

You may recollect, my dear, that my mother, though strictly nice in every particular, has a sort of partiality to her own sex, and where there is the least room for it, throws the whole of the blame upon the *man's* side; who, from her own early prepossessions, she is always inclined to think are deceivers of women. I am not surprized at this bias in her; her early disappointment, with the attending circumstances, gave her this impression. She is warm, and sometimes *sudden*, in her attachments; and yet it is not always difficult to turn her from them. The integrity of her own heart makes her liable to be imposed on by a plausible outside; and yet the dear good woman takes a sort of pride in her sagacity. She had admired and esteemed Mr. Faulkland prodigiously; her vexation was the greater, in finding her expectations disappointed; and could I have been so unjust to the pretensions of another, or so indelicate in regard to myself, as to have overlooked Mr. Faulkland's

land's fault, I knew my mother would be inflexible. I therefore resolved in earnest to banish him from my thoughts. I found my mother was mightily pleased with her own management of the conversation she had held with Mr. Faulkland. I think I talked pretty *roundly* to him, said she; but there was no other way; he is an artful man, and I was resolved not to let him wind me about. He would make a merit of having *formed no designs* upon the young lady; why, possibly, he did not, till he found the poor soul was so smitten with him, that he thought she would be an easy prey. Sir George impudently insinuated, that a man *must* not reject a lady upon these occasions. I was ashamed to hint to Mr. Faulkland at the circumstance of his having actually paid a price for the girl; it was too gross; and I think, had I mentioned it, must have struck him dumb: though very likely he might have had some subterfuge, even for that aggravating part of the story.

How I am shocked, my Cecilia, to think of this! I was glad my mother had spared his confusion on this particular; for though probably, as she observed, he had come prepared with some evasion to this charge, yet what a mean figure must a man make, who is reduced to disingenuous shifts, to excuse

cuse or palliate an action, despicable as well as wicked!

My brother came in, during our discourse, to ask me how I did. My mother answered his question before I had time to speak. She is pretty well, thank God! and not likely to break her heart, though she *knows* your friend Mr. Faulkland's story (and she spoke it scornfully.) My brother said, Sidney, are you as averse to Mr. Faulkland as my mother is? I replied, brother, I wonder you can ask me that question, after what you have been just now told. I always said, answered he, that you did not know the value of the man, and now I am convinced of it. I wish he had never seen you! I wish so too, said I. Sir George walked about the room, and seemed vexed to death. For Heaven's sake, madam, (turning to my mother) now my sister is tolerably recovered, suffer her to see Mr. Faulkland; let her hear what he has to say in his own vindication: I think you may trust to her honour, and her discretion; and if the affair appears to her in so heinous a light as it does to you, I will be contented to give Mr. Faulkland up; but don't shut your own ears, and your daughter's too, against conviction.

Sir, you are disrespectful, said my mother angrily. Dear brother, I cried, I beg you will spare me on this subject; my mother

ther *has* given me leave to judge for myself; she has repeated all that you have said, and all that Mr. Faulkland has been able to urge on the occasion; and I am sorry to tell you, that I think myself bound never to have any farther correspondence with him; therefore you must excuse me for not seeing him. And so the match is broke off, cried Sir George. *It is*, said my mother peremptorily. *It is*, echoed I faintly. Why then, replied Sir George (and he swore), you will never get such another whilst you live. A pretty figure you'll make in the world, when you give it for a reason that you refused *such* a man, after every thing was concluded upon, because truly you found that he had had an intrigue! Why, Sidney, you'll be so laugh'd at! He address'd himself to me, though I knew he meant the reproof for my mother. Sir, answered she, neither your sister nor I shall trouble ourselves much about the opinion of people who *can* laugh at such things. You may put the matter into as ridiculous a light as you please: but this was no common intrigue; you *know* it was not, however you may affect to speak of it. I don't suppose *any* of you are *Saints*, but I trust in Heaven, some are better than others. Oh! madam, madam, said my brother, if you knew the world as well as *I* do, you would think that

that Mr. Faulkland is one of the best. God forbid ! my mother answered coolly. Well, well, madam, cry'd Sir George, I see it is to no purpose to argue ; there are many families of more consequence than ours, and ten times the fortune, that will be very proud of Faulkland's alliance ; and will hardly make it an objection to him, that he was led into a foolish scrape by the wickedness of one woman, and the folly of another. If you make my sister wait for a husband, till you find a man who never offended in that way, I think, mother, you had better take a little boy from his nurse, breed him up under your own eye, and by the time Sidney is a good motherly gentlewoman, you may give her the baby to make a plaything of. For my own part, I am heartily sorry I ever interfered.—People of such nice scruples had better chuse for themselves ; but I cannot help thinking, that both Faulkland and I are very ill used. I told you (said my mother to me) how he would behave. Sir George, I desire you will not distress your sister thus (she saw me sadly cast down : I was ill and weak :) if you have no respect for *me*, have a little tenderness for her.—I beg your pardon, child, said he, I did not mean to distress you, I pity *you*, indeed, Sidney. I could have cry'd at his using that expression, it humbles one so. Madam (to my

my mother,) you shall be troubled no farther by my friend or myself; all I shall say, is this, that whenever my sister gets a husband of your ladyship's chusing, I wish he may have half the worth of the poor rejected Faulkland.

My brother left the room with these words. My mother was downright in a passion, but soon cooled on his withdrawing.

My spirits were quite fatigued; and my mother left me, that I might take a little rest.

What a strange alteration have a few days produced! our domestic peace broke in upon by the unlucky difference between my mother and my brother. My near prospect of——of——oh! let me be ingenuous, and say Happiness, vanished—Poor Mr. Faulkland! *Poor* do I call him? for shame, Sidney—but let the word go; I will not blot it. Mr. Faulkland forbid the house, myself harrassed by a cruel disorder, and hardly able to crawl out of bed. All this has fallen on me within these last fourteen black days. Then I dread the going abroad, or seeing company, I shall look so silly; for the intended wedding began to be talked of;—and the curiosity of people to know the cause of it's being broke off——What wild guesses will be made by some, and what lies invented by others! Then the ill-natured mirth of one half of the girls of
my

my acquaintance, and the *as* provoking condolences of the other half—I am fretted at the thoughts of it—but it cannot be I must bear it all—I wish I were helped; enough to get into the country, to be well out of the reach of such impertinence.

I long to know who this ill-fated girl is, that has been the cause of all this. *A gentlewoman, and very pretty; one that loves Mr. Faulkland, and will shortly make him a parent.* Thus my mother described her to Mr. Faulkland, and he assented to it. Oh! fie, fie, Mr. Faulkland, how could you be so cruel to *her*? How could you use me so ill? and Sir George knew of all this, and makes light of it! it is a strange story! My mother is severe in her virtue, but she is in the right—My brother would sacrifice every consideration to aggrandize his family—To make a purchase of the unhappy creature, and that without her knowledge too, it is horrid! Away, away from my thoughts, thou vile intruder—Return to your Bath mistress, she has a better right to you than I have; she implores your pity; she has no refuge but you; and she may be every way preferable to me—I wish I knew her name, but what is it to me; *mine* will never be Faulkland, *hers* ought. Perhaps Mr Faulkland may be induced to marry her, when he sees her in her present interesting situation. He says he will provide a retreat for
her;

her; to be sure he will have the compassion to visit her: and then who knows what may happen? If I know my own heart, I think I do most sincerely wish he may make her his wife; but then I would not chuse to have it known suddenly; that might look as if he forsook me for her. *That*, I own, would a little hurt my pride. I wish not the truth to be known, for Mr. Faulkland's sake; but then I should not like to have a slur thrown on me.

I will add no more to this, but send the packet off at all events; I think it will find you at Paris.

August 1.——My health promises to return: my mother praises me, and calls me a Heroine. I begin to fancy myself one: our pride sometimes stands in the place of virtue.

Sir George went to Richmond yesterday. We have scarce seen him since the time he had with us the other day. What strange creatures these men are, even the best of them! and how light they make of faults in one another, that shock us but to think of!

My mother takes his behaviour very ill: he staid all night with his friend, and returned to town this morning: he only looked into my room, to ask me how I did: my mother was sitting with me. I believe that hindered him from coming in; for he looked,

ed as if he wanted to speak to me. He bowed to my mother, but said not a word; he went abroad again as soon as he was dressed, and did not come in till late. I fear his conduct will oblige us to separate; for my mother will not brook any liberties to be taken with her: she hinted as much, and said she believed Sir George was tired of living regularly.

She anticipated the request I intended to make to her, of letting me go out of town; for she said, as soon as I was able, I should remove into the country for a while. Sidney-Castle is too long a Journey for me at present to think of undertaking, and she talks of going into Essex, on a visit to Lady Grimston, which we have long promised her. I shall like this better than going down to Wiltshire, where the want of my Cecilia would make my old abode a melancholy place, especially at this juncture.

August 4.—Sir George continues sullen and cold to us: he never has had an opportunity of saying any thing particular to me since the day he said so much. My mother scarce ever leaves me; he seems nettled at this. I believe he would endeavour to work on *me*, as he knows the attempt would be vain in regard to *her*. As I am now well enough to receive the visits of our intimate acquaintance, I am never without company. I am really in pretty good spirits, and bear
my

my disappointment (as I told you I would) very handsomely. I never hear Mr. Faulkland's name mentioned, no more than if such a man did not exist. We are to set out for lady Grimston's house on Tuesday; it is but twenty Miles from London; and I am already strong enough to bear a longer journey.

My mother told Sir George, that if he liked it, the house we are now in was at his service during her time of it, of which there are some months to come; for she said she meant to go directly home from Essex. Sir George thanked her, but did not say whether he would accept of her offer or not.

August 5.—I have been obliged to turn away my poor Ellen. She was so imprudent as to receive a letter for me from Mr. Faulkland's man, contrary to my mother's express commands. She brought it to me, and I gave it to my mother unopened, who put it directly into the fire without reading it, and told me it would oblige her, if I would part with the servant who had presumed to take it after her prohibition. I instantly obeyed, and have just discharged her. I should have a sad loss of her, only I am in hopes of having her place well supplied by an old acquaintance and play-fellow of ours, poor Patty Main; her father is dead, and she is obliged to go to service, for he has left a widow.

widow with six children. The eldest son, you remember, served his time to his father, and is just now setting out in business ; but a young surgeon in a country town must take some time to establish himself ; though he is a very worthy youth, and I hear clever in his profession.

Patty came to town last week with a lady from our neighbourhood, who applied to my mother to recommend the girl to wait on some person of fashion. My mother has been looking out for a suitable place for her ; but she told me to-day, she thought I could not do better than take her to myself ; I shall be very glad to have her, for she is an amiable young woman.

August 6.—We go out of town at seven o'clock to-morrow morning, as we are to dine at Grimston-hall, and purpose going at our leisure. I will steal a few minutes from sleep, though it is now very late, to give you a short scene which passed in my chamber about an hour ago.

Sir George (who, according to his late custom, had been abroad all day) came into my room, where my mother and I were sitting together. He asked us, did we hold our purpose of going out of town next day ? Yes, certainly, my mother said. And you intend going from lady Grimston's to Sidney-Castle ? We do. Then, madam (to my mother), as it is the last trouble you are likely

ly to have from Mr. Faulkland, I hope you will not refuse to read this letter, which he has sent you ; and he took one out of his pocket, and presented it to her. She did not make an offer to receive it, but answered, Sir George, it is to no purpose for Mr. Faulkland to solicit me ; you know I don't easily alter my resolutions when once they are fixed : he has given himself an unnecessary trouble ; pray excuse me : it was not handsome of him to write to my daughter, after he knew my sentiments. You need not be afraid of fresh solicitations, madam, said my brother ; I knew enough of your *firmness* (and he spoke the word firmness reluctantly, as if he would rather use another, perhaps less respectful term ;) I knew enough to assure Faulkland there was not the least hope left for him ; and though I do not know the subject of that letter, I can venture to assure you, it is not intended to move you in favour of his pretensions : this he declared to me, before I would take the letter from him ; but what puts it past doubt, is, that he set out this very evening from London, in order to embark for Germany. I could not help breathing a sigh when Sir George said this ; but no body heard me. He still held the letter in his hand, and again offered it to my mother ; you need not be afraid of it, madam ; I presume it may be no more than to take a
civil

civil leave of you. I wish him well, said my mother, taking the letter ; if that be all, what he says may keep cold ; and she put it into her pocket without opening.

This being the eve of our journey, some little domestick matters, which my mother had to settle, called her out of the room. Sir George took that opportunity to ask me, whether my mother had shewed me the letter which he had received from Mr. Faulkland while he was at Bath, relative to that cursed affair, as he called it. I told him, my mother had repeated great part of the contents of it to me ; and that the principal observation she had made, was not favourable to *him*, on account of his being made the confidant of such an affair.

I am very sorry for your sake, Sidney, said he, that our mother is of so inflexible a temper ; you have lost by it, what you will have reason to regret as long as you live. Such amazing obstinacy ! such unaccountable perverseness ! I do not want to shake your filial obedience ; but I, for my own part, think that nothing but infatuation can account for your mother's conduct——Does she want a man without passions ? Or have *you* filled your head with such chimaerical notions as to—I interrupted him (for my brother is not always nice in his choice of words ;)—Dear Sir George, say no more ;

I am

I am very well contented as I am. I will not increase your uneasiness, said he, by telling you what Faulkland has suffered on this occasion. If ever love was carried to adoration, it was in the breast of that generous, charming fellow—but you have lost him—and I have lost him; thanks to my wise scrupulous mother for that. I begged of him to drop the subject. My mother came in to us again. Sir George bid us good night, and wished us a good journey. The parting was cool enough. I am glad however, there is not a total rupture. I believe he will continue in our house in town for a time, at least.

Patty Main, who gladly accepted of the offer of my service, came home to me this evening. She is grown very tall and genteel. I hardly know how to treat her as a servant; but the good girl is so humble, that she does all in her power to make me forget that I ever knew her in a better situation; but in this she fails of her purpose, for it only serves to remind me the more strongly of it: she is so ready and so handy, that she does twenty little offices that do not belong to her place, and which are not expected of her. My mother is exceedingly pleased with her, and says it is such a happiness to have about me a young person virtuously brought

brought up, that she almost considers her as one of the family.

Grimston-hall, August 8.

We arrived here yesterday, and met a most friendly reception from the lady of this mansion. But before I say any more of her, I will hasten to a more interesting subject. I have got Mr. Faulkland's letter to my mother; she has just put it into my hands; and while she walks in the garden with lady Grimston, I will make haste to transcribe it. Thus it is:

Madam,

I submit to the sentence you have passed on me. I am miserable, but do not presume to expostulate. I purpose leaving England directly; but would wish, if possible (a little to mitigate the severity of my lot,) to convince you, that the unhappy rejected Man, who aspired to the honour of being your son-in-law, is not quite such a criminal as he now appears to you.

To Sir George's friendship I know I am much indebted for endeavouring to vindicate me. It was not in his power, it was not in my own; for you saw all which I, in unreserved freedom, wrote to him on the subject of my acquaintance with Miss B.

I have but one resource left; perhaps, madam, you will think it a strange one. To the lady herself I must appeal. She will

will do me justice, and I am sure will be ready to acknowledge that I am no betrayer of innocence, no breaker of promises ; that I was surprized into the commission of a fault, for which I have so dear a price.

Her testimony, madam, may perhaps have some weight with you ; though I propose nothing more by it, than that you may think of me with less detestation. You have banished me from your presence : I 'am a voluntary exile from my country, and from my friends : I submit to the chastisement, and would do any thing to expiate my offence against you and Miss Bidulph. There is but *one* command which you can possibly lay on me, to which I would not pay a perfect and ready obedience ; but that act, perhaps, is the only one which would make me appear worthy of your esteem.

The lady whom it has been my ill fate to render unhappy, and by whom I am made unutterably so, will, ere long, come to a house at Putney, which I have taken on purpose for her. I have placed in it my housekeeper, a grave worthy woman, under whose care she will be safe, and attended with that secrecy and tenderness which her condition requires.

I have written to her a faithful account of every thing relative to my hoped-for alliance with your family, and the occasion of the

treaty's being broken off. As she must, by this means, know that your ladyship is acquainted with her story, I have told her, that, perhaps you might, from the interest you took in her misfortune, be induced to see her in her retirement. Let me, therefore, conjure you, madam, by the pious zeal which governs all your actions, and by the love you bear that daughter so deservedly dear to you, to take compassion on this young lady. She has no friends, nor any acquaintance in this part of the kingdom; her situation will require the comfort of society, and perhaps, the advice of wisdom. It will be an act worthy of your humanity to shew some countenance to her.

I think she will be in very good hands with the honest woman who waits her coming; but if any thing should happen otherwise than well, it would make me doubly wretched.

To one who has no resources of contentment in her own bosom, solitude cannot be a friend; this I fear may be the lady's case; and this makes me with the more earnestness urge my request to you. Forgive me, madam, for the liberty I take with you; a liberty, which, though I confess, it needs an apology, yet is it at the same time a proof of the confidence I have in you, which I hope
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will not affront either your candour or your virtue.

If you will condescend to grant this request, I shall obtain the two wishes at present most material to my peace; the one to secure to the lady a compassionate friend, already inclined to espouse her cause; the other, to put it in your power to be satisfied from the lady's own mouth, of the truth of what I have asserted. I trust to her generosity to deal openly on this occasion.

I wish you and Miss Bidulph every blessing that Heaven can bestow, and am, with great respect,

Madam,

Your ladyship's

Most obedient, humble Servant,

ORLANDO FAULKLAND.

P. S. The lady will go by the name of Mrs. Jefferis: you will pardon me for not having mentioned her *real name*. I never yet told it even to Sir George; but I presume she will make no secret of it to you, if you honour her with a visit.

Poor Orlando! unhappy Miss B! I could name a third person, that is not *happy* neither. What a pity it is, that so many good qualities, should be blotted by imperfections! how tender is his compassion for this poor girl! how ingenuous his conduct! but still he flies from her. I fear she can never hope

to recover him. There is but *one* thing, he says, which *he would not do; the only act, perhaps, by which he could make himself appear worthy of my mother's esteem.* The meaning of this but too plainly shews him determined against marrying Miss B. I don't know any thing else which would reconcile my mother to him.

I make no doubt of her complying with Mr. Faulkland's request in seeing the lady: she is very compassionate, particularly to her own sex.

What a *strange resource* indeed is this of Mr. Faulkland's, to appeal to the lady herself! what am I to judge from it, but that the unfortunate victim, ignorant of the treachery that was practised against her by her wicked aunt, and that her destroyer paid a *price* for her dishonour, exculpates him from the worst part of the guilt, and perhaps, poor easy creature, blames her own weakness only for the error which a concealed train of cunning and perfidy might have led her into?

But even supposing Miss B. were generous and candid enough (and great indeed must be her candour and generosity) to justify this guilty man, what would it avail? Did not my mother tell me she conceived a *sort of horror at the bare idea of an union between Mr. Faulkland and me?* This arises from the strong impression made on her by the
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the unlucky event which blasted her own early love. Strong and early prejudices are almost insurmountable.

My mother's piety, genuine and rational as it is, is notwithstanding a little tinctured with superstition; it was the error of her education, and her good sense has not been able to surmount it; so that I know the universe would not induce her to change her resolution in regard to Mr. Faulkland. She thinks he *ought* to marry Miss B. and she will *ever* think so. I wish he would; for I am sure he never can be mine. The bell rings for breakfast; I must run down. My mother came up to dress just now, and stepped into my room. I returned her the letter, and she asked me, what I thought of Mr. Faulkland's request? Madam, you are a better judge of the propriety of it than I am. I shall have no objection to seeing the unhappy lady, said she, since it seems he has apprised her of my knowledge of her affairs. I am glad he has the grace to shew even so much compassion for her: perhaps it may be the beginning of repentance, and time may work a thorough reformation in him, if God spares him his life and his *senses*. You see which way my good mother's thoughts tended. I did not, she added, intend to return to London again; but this occasion, I think, calls upon me; and I believe I shall

go for a while, in order to see and comfort this poor young creature. She cannot yet be near lying in; and I suppose she will not come to the house Mr. Faulkland speaks of, 'till she can no longer remain undiscovered at home; so that a month or two hence will be full soon enough for me to think of going to town.

I saw my mother rested her compliance with Mr. Faulkland's request, merely on one point; that of compassion to the girl. As for the other motive, said she, the hearing him justified from the *Lady's own mouth*, I am not such a novice in those matters, but that I know when a deluding man has once got an ascendancy over a young creature, he can coax her into any thing. Too much truth I doubt there is in this observation of my mother's.

But it is time to say something of lady Grimston. My Cecilia has never seen her, though I believe she has often heard my mother speak of her. They are nearly of an age, and much of the same cast of thinking; though with this difference, that lady Grimston is extravagantly rigid in her notions, and precise in her manner. She has been a widow for many years, and lives upon a large jointure at Grimston-hall, with as much regularity and solemnity, as you would see in a monastery. Her servants are all antediluvians;

ans; I believe her coach-horses are fifty years of age, and the very house-dog is as grey as a badger. She herself, who in her youth never *could* have been handsome, renders herself still a more unpleasing figure, by the oddity of her dress; you would take her for a lady of Charles the first's court at least. She is always dressed out: I believe she sleeps in her cloaths, for she comes down ruffled, and towered, and flounced, and fardingaled, even to breakfast. My mother has a very high opinion of her, and says, she *knows more of the world* than any one of her acquaintance. It may be so; but it must be of the old world; for lady Grimston has not been ten miles from her seat these thirty years. 'Tis nine years since my mother and she met before, and there was a world of compliments passed between them; though I am sure they were sincerely glad to see each other, for they seem to be very fond. They were companions in youth, that season wherein the most durable friendships are contracted. I believe her really a very good woman; she is pious and charitable, and does abundance of good things in her neighbourhood; though I cannot say, I think her amiable. There is an austerity about her that keeps me in awe, notwithstanding that she is extremely obliging to me, and told my mother, I *promised to make a fine woman*.

Think of such a compliment to one of almost nineteen. My mother and she call one another by their christian names ; and you would smile to hear the two old ladies (begging their pardons). *Lettying* and *Dollying* one another. This accounts to me for Lady Grimston's think *me* still a child ; for I suppose she considers herself not much past girlhood, though, to do her justice, she has not a scrap of it in her behaviour.

August 10.——All our motions here are as regular as the clock. The family rise at six ; we are summoned to breakfast at eight ; at ten a venerable congregation are assembled to prayers, which an antient clergyman, who is curate of the parish, and her ladyship's chaplain, gives us daily. Then the old horses are put to the old coach ; and my lady, with her guests, if they chuse it, take an airing ; always going and returning by the same road, and driving precisely to the same land-mark, and no farther. At half an hour after twelve, in a hall large enough to entertain a corporation, we sit down to dinner ; my lady has a grace of a quarter of an hour long, and we are waited on by four truly venerable footmen, for she likes state. The afternoon we may dispose of as we please ; at least it is a liberty I am indulged in, and I generally spend my time
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in the garden, or my own chamber, 'till I have notice given me of supper's being on the table, where we are treated with the same ceremonials as at dinner. At ten exactly, the instant the clock strikes the first stroke, my lady rises with great solemnity, and wishes us a good night.

August 14.—You cannot expect, in such a house as this is, my dear, that I can be furnished with materials to give you much variety. Indeed these four last days have been so exactly the same in every particular, excepting that the dishes at dinner and supper were changed, that I had resolved to hang up my pen 'till I quitted Grimston-hall, or at least resign it to Patty, and let her plod on and tell you how the wind blew such a day; what sort of a mantua lady Grimston had on such a day (though by the way it is always the same, always ash-coloured tiffue); what the great dog barked at, at such an hour, and what the old parrot said at such a time; the house and the garden I have exhausted my descriptive faculties on already, though they are neither of them worth describing; and I was beginning to despair of matter to furnish out a quarter of an hour's entertainment, when the scene began to brighten a little this auspicious day, by the arrival of a coach full of visitors. These

were no other than a venerable dean, who is the minister of our parish, his lady and daughter, and a Mr. Arnold, a gentleman who is a distant relation of lady Grimston's. He has a house in this neighbourhood, and is just come to an estate by the death of his elder brother.

This visit has given me hopes that I may now-and-then have a chance for seeing a human face, besides the antiques of the family, and those which are depicted on the arras. Though, not to disparage the people, they were all agreeable enough in their different ways. The old dean is good humoured and polite ; I mean the true politeness, that of the heart, which dictates the most obliging things in so frank a manner, that they have not the least appearance of flattery. Being very near sighted, ~~he~~ put on a pair of spectacles to look at me, and turning to Mr. Arnold, with a vivacity that would have become five-and-twenty, he repeated

‘ With an air and a face,

‘ And a shape and a grace, &c.’

The young man smiled his assent, and my mother looked so delighted, that the good-natured dean's compliment pleased *me* for *her* sake. Lady Grimston, who is passionately fond of musick, has a very pretty organ in one of her chambers ; Mr. Arnold

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was requested to give us a lesson on it, which he very readily obliged us with. He plays ravishingly; the creature made me envious, he touched it so admirably. I had taken a sort of dislike to him when he first came in, I cannot tell why or wherefore; but this accomplishment has reconciled me so to him, that I am half in love with him. I hope we shall see him often; he is really excellent on this instrument, and you know how fond I am of musick.

August 15.—This packet is already so large that I am sure it will frighten you. I will therefore send it off before I encrease it; especially as I am so now much in the humdrum way, that I ought, out of policy, to make a break in my narrative, in order to encourage you to read it. Positively, if things do not mend, and that considerably too,—Patty shall keep the Journal, for I find myself already disposed to sleep over it.

August 20.—I have looked over what Patty has writ for the five last days; upon my word she is a very good journalist, as well as amanuensis; and she has given you, to the full, as good an account of matters and things as I could.

My time passes rather more tolerably than I expected. The dean's family seem to have broke the solitary *spell* that hung over
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the house, and we have company you see every day. Mr. Arnold never fails. I always make him play; he is very obliging, and, if he were not good-natured, I should tire him.

August 22.—I have had a letter from Sir Geo. he mentions not Mr. Faulkland; I too am endeavouring to forget him. When my mother goes to London, I will try to prevail on her to let me go down to Sidney-castle. I have no inclination to go to town, and less to stay here. We are to have a concert to-morrow, at Mr. Arnold's house. My lively good old dean touches the bass viol, his daughter sings prettily; I am to bear my part too; so that we begin to grow a little sociable.

August 30.—Are you not tired of my Grimston journal, my Cecilia? Day after day rolls on, and the same dull repetition! Lady Grimston, the Dean, and Mr. Arnold, perpetually! there is no bearing this, you cry. Well but here is a new personage arrived to diversify the scene a little. Lady Grimston's daughter, a sweet woman; but her mother does not seem fond of her. It amazes me, for she is perfectly amiable, both in temper and person; she is a widow of about eight and twenty. Lady Grimston appears to treat her with a distance very unmaternal;

maternal ; and the poor young woman seems so humbled, that I pity her. She is come but on a visit, and we shall lose her in a week, for which I am very sorry, as I have taken a fancy to her.

September 1.—Poor Mrs. Vere ! that is the name of Lady Grimston's daughter. I can now give you the cause of her mother's coldness to her ; I had it from herself ; she told me her little history this evening in the garden, with a frankness that charmed me.

How happy you are, dear Miss Bidulph, said she ! you seem to be blessed with one of the tenderest of parents. I am indeed, I answered ; she is one of the best of mothers, and the best of women. She sighed, and a tear started into her eye ; I too was happy once, said she, when my indulgent father lived. I hope, madam, Lady Grimston is to you, what my good mother is to me. She shook her head : No, Miss Bidulph, it must be but too obvious to you that she is not. I should not have introduced the subject, if the cold severity of her looks were not so apparent that you must have taken notice of them. My mother is, undoubtedly, a very good woman ; and you may naturally suppose, that my conduct has been such as to deserve her frowns ; I will therefore tell you my melancholy, though

though short story. It is now about twelve years since Mr. Vere paid his addresses to me. He was the eldest son of a gentleman of family and fortune, who then lived in this country. I was about sixteen, and the darling of my father; who was perhaps the more indulgent to me, as he knew my mother's severity. Mr. Vere was but two years older than myself, and a childish courtship had gone on for some time between us, before it was suspected by any body; and to say the truth, before I was well aware of the consequences myself. It happened, that an elderly gentleman of a great estate, just at that time saw and liked me, and directly made proposals to my mother, as she was well known to hold the reins of government in her family.

This offer, I suppose, was advantageous; for she immediately consulted my father upon it, or rather gave him to understand that she meant to dispose of her daughter in marriage.

My father, who had no objection to the match, told her he was very well satisfied, provided I liked the gentleman; but said, he hoped she would not think of putting any force on my inclinations. My eldest sister had been married some time before by my mother's sole authority, and quite contrary

trary to her own liking ; the marriage had not turned out happily, and my father was resolved not to have me sacrificed in the same way.

My mother told him, she was sorry he had such romantic notions, as to think a girl of my age capable of having any ideas of preference for one man more than another ; that she took it for granted I had never presumed to entertain a thought of any man as yet, and supposed her precepts had not been so far thrown away upon me, as that I could let it enter into my head that any thing but paternal authority was to guide me in my choice.

My father, from the gentleness of his nature, had been so accustomed to acquiesce, that he made no other reply than to bid my mother use her discretion. He came directly to me notwithstanding, and told me what had passed. It was then, for the first time, that I discovered I loved Mr. Vere. I burst into tears, and clinging round my father's neck, begged of him to save me from my mother's rigour. My gesture and words were too passionate for him not to perceive, that there was something more at my heart than mere dislike of the old man. He charged me to deal sincerely. I loved

loved him too well, and was myself too frank to do otherwise. In short, I confessed my inclination for Mr. Vere, and his affection for me.

Though my kind father chid me gently for admitting a lover without his or my mother's approbation, yet at the same time he told me, he would endeavour to dissuade her from prosecuting the other match; though he could wish, he said, I would try to bring myself to accept of it; adding he was afraid my mother would be much incensed by a denial.

My mother was fond of grandeur; and would not like to have me marry any one, who could not at once make me mistress of a fine house, and fine Garden, and fine equipage; which I knew I must not expect to be the case with Mr. Vere. His father had several children, and was very frugal in his temper: besides, as he was but of the middle age, and of a very healthy constitution, his son's prospect of possessing the estate, was to all human appearance, at a very great distance.

These discouragements, however, did not hinder me from indulging my wishes. My father's tenderness was the foundation on which I built my hopes. I told Mr. Vere the designs of one parent, and the kind condescension

condescension of the other. Emboldened by this information, he ventured to disclose his love to my father, begging his interest with my mother in his favour. He had a great kindness for the youth, and was so fond of me, that he would readily have consented to my happiness, if the fear of disobliging my mother had not checked him. He represented to her in the mildest manner, the utter dislike I had expressed of the proposed match, and conjured her not to insist on it. My mother, unused to be controuled, was filled with resentment both against him and me; she said, he encouraged me in my disobedience; and that, if he did not unite his authority to her's, in order to compel me to marry the gentleman she approved of, it would make a total breach between them.

My good father, who loved my mother exceedingly, was alarmed at this menace. Unwilling to come to extremities either with her or me, he was at a loss how to act. His paternal love at length prevailed, and he determined, at all events, to save me from the violence which he knew would be put upon my heart.

My mother had never condescended to talk to me on the subject: she thought my immediate obedience ought to have followed

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ed the bare knowledge of her will. She forbade me her sight, and charged me never to appear before her, 'till I came with a determination to obey her.

However severe this prohibition was, I yielded to it with the less reluctance, as my father's tender love made me amends for my mother's harshness. Perhaps, had she vouchsafed to reason a little with me, tempering her arguments with a motherly kindness, she would have found me as flexible as she could wish; but the course she took had a very contrary effect. I thought myself persecuted, and that it was for the honour of my love to persevere. On the other hand, my father's secret indulgence encouraged me in the sentiments I entertained, and I now determined, not only to refuse my old lover, but to have my young one.

My mother had given me a stated time in which I was to come to a resolution, and if I did not, at the expiration of it, acquiesce, I was to be pronounced a reprobate, and to be no more considered as her child. In this emergency I had recourse to my father. I told him there was nothing which I was not ready to suffer, rather than marry the man I hated: my greatest affliction was the uneasiness I saw him endure on my account; for

for my mother reproached him daily with my obstinacy.

My father said, he thought the alternative offered by my mother, was to be avoided but in one way, and that was by marrying Mr. Vere; for, added he, when she finds you resolute in your refusal of her choice, not even my paternal authority will be able to screen you from her severity, and your life will be made miserable, without your father's being able to relieve you. On the other hand, when you are out of her house, she cannot distress you, nor prevent me from doing you the justice which I owe my child. Nay, possibly in time, I may be able to work out a reconciliation between you; but she must not know that I was consenting to this marriage, lest an irreconcilable quarrel should ensue. I fell at my father's feet, and embraced his knees, for this tender and unexpected proof of his affection.

Mr. Vere's father was no stranger to his son's attachment, and we were very sure he would readily come into the proposal which my father intended to make.

The two parents had a meeting secretly, where all terms of portion and settlement were speedily and privately adjusted. Mr. Vere the father, who had been long intimate
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in our family, knew very well the necessity there was for keeping the secret. After this, my lover and I were to be married privately, without the knowledge, seemingly, of any one in either family, excepting one of the Miss Veres, who was to be present; and when the time of my probation was expired, my father was to let my mother into the knowledge of this affair, as a thing he had just discovered; and to pacify her anger as well as he could.

Every thing was conducted in the manner proposed. I was married with the utmost privacy, and continued in my father's house till the day arrived, when I was to give my definitive answer.

Unfortunately for me, my mother chose to receive it from my own mouth, and called me into her presence. I appeared before her trembling and terrified: I had not seen her for a fortnight, and I was in dread, lest the discovery I had to make, should banish me her sight perhaps for ever, unless my father might influence her in time to forgive me. She asked me, with a stern brow, What I had resolved on? I had not courage to make her an answer, but burst into tears. She repeated her question; and I could only reply, Madam, it is not in my *power* to obey you. She did not comprehend the meaning

meaning of my words, but imputing them to obstinacy, commanded me to leave the room, and not to see her face 'till I came to a proper sense of my duty ; at the same time ordering me into my chamber, where I was to be locked up.

I flew to my father, and conjured him to let my mother know the truth at once, that I might no longer be subject to such harsh treatment ; for I knew the being sent home to my husband would be the consequence of her being told that I had one.

My poor father was almost afraid to undertake the task, though he had been the chief promoter of my marriage, and his authority ought to have given sanction to it. He ventured however to let her know, that I had confessed to him what my fears of her immediate resentment would not suffer me to discover whilst I was in her presence ; and what my aversion to the man she proposed to me, and the rigours I had been threatened with, if I refused him, had driven me to. The rage my mother flew into, was little short of phrenzy, and my father made haste to send me out of the house.

Mr. Vere's whole family received me with great tenderness ; but I was sorry at leaving my father, whose visits to me were made but seldom, and even those by stealth.

My

My situation, though I was united to the man I loved, and careſſed by all his family, was far from being happy. My mother's inflexible temper was not to be wrought upon, notwithstanding my father did his utmoſt to prevail on her to ſee and to forgive me; and ſhe carried her reſentment ſo far, that ſhe told my father, unleſs he cut me off entirely in his will, ſhe was determined to ſeparate herſelf totally from him. This was an extremity he by no means expected ſhe would have gone to.

In a fit of ſickneſs, which had ſeized him a few years before, he had left me ten thouſand pounds; five of this he had ſecretly transferred to Mr. Vere on the day of my marriage, and had promiſed him to bequeath me five more at his death.

In conſequence of this diſpoſition, he purpoſed making a new will, ſo that he the leſs ſcrupled giving my mother up the old one, with a promiſe of making another agreeable to her requeſt.

My mother's jointure was already ſettled on her; my eldeſt ſiſter had received her portion; ſo that there was little bequeathed by this teſtament, but my fortune, and a few other ſmall legacies.

My mother tore the will with indignation, and not ſatiſfied with my father's promiſe, inſiſted on his putting it into execution

on immediately. In short, his easy temper yielded to her importunities, and he had a will drawn up by her instructions, in which I was cut off with one shilling, and my intended fortune bequeathed to my eldest sister. My mother was made residuary legatee to every thing that should remain, after paying all the bequests. This would have amounted to a considerable sum, if the half of my portion, which was already paid without her knowledge, had not made such a diminution in the personal estate, that after paying my sister the whole of what was specified in the will, there was scarce any thing likely to remain.

Had my mother known this secret, she would not perhaps have been so ready to have made my father devise all my intended fortune to my sister. My father who was aware of this, durst not however inform her at that juncture, how much she hurt herself, by forcing him to such measures. She insisted upon his leaving the whole of what he designed for me to my eldest sister; as well to convince him, she said, that she had no self-interested views, as to be an example to other rebellious children.

My father had no remedy on these occasions, but a patient acquiescence: the will was made, and my mother herself would keep it.

My

My father took an opportunity the same day to inform me what he had done, but assured me, he would immediately make another will, agreeable to his first intentions, and leave it in the hands of a faithful friend.

This was his design; but! alas he lived not to execute it. He was seized that night with a paralytic disorder, which at once deprived him of the use of his limbs and his speech. They who were about him believe he retained his senses, but he was not capable of making himself understood even by signs. Alarmed with this dismal account of my beloved father's situation, I flew to the house without considering my mother's displeasure; but I was not permitted to see him. I filled the house with my cries, but to no purpose; I had not the satisfaction of receiving even a farewell look from him, which was all he was capable of bestowing on me.

He languished for several days in this melancholy condition, and then, in spite of the aid of physic, expired.

The loss of this dear father so entirely took up my thoughts, that I never reflected on the loss of the remaining part of my fortune; but it was not so with my father-in-law. There had been a settlement made on me in consequence of the fortune promised

mised ; though not equal to what it demanded, yet superior to the half which was paid. He relied on my father's word for the remainder, and had no doubt of its being secured to him, knowing his circumstances, as well as his strict integrity, and that my sister had actually received the same fortune which I was promised.

Mr. Vere had four daughters, and it was on this fortune he chiefly depended to provide for them.

The news of my being cut off with a shilling exceedingly surprized and exasperated him. Unluckily I had not mentioned to him, nor even to my husband, the will which my father had been obliged to make. The assurances he gave me, of immediately making another in my favour, prevented me ; as I thought it would only be a very severe proof of my mother's enmity to the family, which I could have wished to conceal from them ; especially as I did not imagine it would have affected me afterwards. Mr. Vere the elder was from home when my father died, and his business detained him for more than a month after his funeral was over. My husband, on this occasion, shewed the tender and disinterested love he bore me ; he affected to make as light as possible of this unexpected disappointment, but at

the same time expressed his uneasiness, lest his father should carry matters to an extremity with my mother, from whom we knew we were to expect nothing by mild methods.

It was now thought adviseable, that I should write to my mother, to condole with her on my father's death; again to intreat her forgiveness of my fault, and, as some mitigation of it, to acknowledge that it was not only with my father's privity, but even with his consent and approbation, that I had married.

I wrote this letter in a strain of the utmost humility, without mentioning a word of my fortune; *that* I thought it would be time enough for me to do, if I could prevail on my mother to see me, and would at all events come better from my husband or his father, than from me. But I gained nothing by this, only some unkind reflections on my father's memory, and a message, that since he thought proper to marry his daughter in a manner so highly disagreeable to her mother, he should have taken care of providing for her; as he could not expect a parent, so disobliged as she had been, would take any notice of me.

My mother had been left sole executrix to my father's forced will; and she took care to put my sister, and the other legatees, into possession

possession of what was bequeathed to them, in a very short time after his decease. She found there was an unexpected deficiency in his personal fortune, inso-much that there was barely enough to pay his debts; and that her being left the residue, after the specified legacies were paid, amounted to nothing. On the contrary, had my father's just intentions taken place, in leaving me five thousand pounds, she would have come in for the other five; but the whole ten thousand now went to my sister,

She was not long however at a loss to know how this came to pass. Mr. Vere determined to assert his own, and his son's right; and being exceedingly provoked at my mother's behaviour, wrote to her immediately on his return home; and having informed her of the settlement made on me, on account of the fortune already paid, and what was farther agreed on to be paid by my father, told her, he expected that this promise should be punctually fulfilled. He said, he knew she had it in her power to do this; and since it was by her contrivance I had been robbed of my just right, if honour, and the duty of a parent, would not induce her to make me proper amends, she must excuse him, if he

made use of such means as the laws allowed him, in order to compel her.

Such a letter, to a woman of my mother's temper, met with such a reception as might be expected. She tore it before his messenger's face ; and desired him to tell his master, that as what he had already obtained was by fraud, so he was at liberty to make use of force to recover the remainder ; but with her consent, he never should have a single shilling.

This exasperating reply, made my father-in-law directly commence a suit against her, in which the other legatees were made parties. The distress I felt on this occasion is scarce to be imagined ; the breach was now so widened between my mother and my husband's family, that there remained not the least hope of its ever being closed. Mr. Vere unwillingly joined with his father in pursuit of these measures. He would for my sake much rather have yielded up his expectations, than supported them at the expence of my quiet ; but his father's will, and justice to the rest of the family, compelled him to proceed, and deprived me of any pretence for interposing.

The law-suit was carrying on with great acrimony on both sides, when an event happened, that made me then, and has indeed
ever

ever since, look with indifference on every thing in this life ; it was the death of my husband. He was snatched from me by a violent fever, before he reached his twentieth year.

I will not pretend to describe my sufferings to you on this sad occasion ; they were aggravated by my being near the time of lying-in.

Whatever affliction Mr. Vere felt for the death of his only son, it did not make him forgetful of what he owed his daughters ; and he was resolved to carry on the law-suit with the utmost vigour.

You may suppose the house wherein I had lost a beloved husband appeared a dismal place to me, especially in my present situation. I thought too, my father's looks began to grow colder to me than they used to be ; and I begged I might have his permission to remove for a while. He did not oppose it, and I went, at the pressing intreaties of your favourite, the good old dean, to his house ; where he and his lady behaved to me with more than parental tenderness. My health was in so declining a way, that this worthy man (as I have since learned) made several applications to my mother to see me, but without success. At length the hour of my delivery arrived, and I was

brought to-bed of a dead female child. The estate, in case of Mr. Vere's dying without issue, devolved on his sisters; and I was in hopes this circumstance, so favourable to the young ladies, would have induced their father to have been less rigorous in persisting in his claim. But in this I was deceived; he loved money, and was besides full of resentment against my mother. I thought however of an expedient, which I flattered myself might work upon him; and by good fortune it succeeded.

Mr. Vere, though I had left his house, visited me constantly, and kept up a shew of tenderness, which I am sure he had not in his heart. I told him one day, whilst I was still confined to my bed, that as I had now lost both my husband and my child, a very moderate income would be sufficient for me; and that as I valued my mother's peace of mind, beyond any selfish consideration, I was very willing to give up half my jointure, provided he would drop his suit. Mr. Vere seemed surprized at the proposal: he said, he wondered I could be so blind to my own interest, and that all he was doing was purely for my sake. I thanked him for his pretended friendship, but assured him, he could serve me no way so effectually, as by coming into the
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the measure I proposed. Mr. Vere said, I talked like a child; but he would consider of it. The following day he called on me again, and told me, that to make me easy, he was willing to come into my proposal; that he would have the proper instruments drawn, by which I was to relinquish half my jointure; and he in consequence to give up all claim on my father's estate.

I was much better pleased, at this losing agreement, than if I had acquired a large accession of fortune.

Mr. Vere soon got the proper deeds ready, and they were executed in form.

I now relapsed into an illness, from which I was supposed to have been quite recovered, and my life was thought in great danger. I have since been told, that Mr. Vere repented his agreement at that juncture, and told some of his friends, that if he had not been so hasty, he should have had a chance for my jointure and my fortune too.

I begged of the dean to go to my mother, and use his last efforts on her, to prevail with her to see and forgive me before I died; at the same time, I sent her the release I had procured from Mr. Vere, which I knew was the most acceptable present I could make her. The dean urged the danger I was in, without its seeming to make much impression on her.

I am willing to believe, that she thought the dean exaggerated in his account of my illness. He owned to me himself, that he was shocked to find her so obdurate. At length, he took the paper out of his pocket, and presenting it to her, I am sorry, madam, said he, I cannot prevail upon you to act like a parent or a christian; your daughter I fear will not survive her present malady; but she will have the comfort to consider, that she has left nothing unattempted to obtain that forgiveness, which you so cruelly deny her. I hope, lady Grimston, your last hours may be as peaceful, as her's I trust will be from this reflection. There, madam—she has by that instrument left you disengaged from a troublesome and vexatious law-suit, that would, if pursued, infallibly turn out to your disadvantage; it was all she *could* do, and what few children, used like her, *would* have done.

My mother, a good deal alarmed at the dean's manner of speaking, now examined the contents of the paper. She seemed affected, and called him back, as he was just leaving the room. She told him, she was not lost to the feelings of nature; and that if he thought her presence would contribute to ease my mind of the remorse it must
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needs labour under, she was not against seeing me.

The good man, glad to find her in this yielding disposition, told her she could not too soon execute her intention ; and pressed her to come to his house directly. She suffered him to put her into his coach, and he carried her home with him. The interview, on my side, was attended with tears of joy, tenderness, and contrition. My mother did not depart from her usual austerity ; she gave me but her hand to kiss, and pronounced her forgiveness and her blessing in so languid a manner, as greatly damped the fervour of my joy.

She staid with me not more than a quarter of an hour, and having talked of indifferent things, without once so much as mentioning what I had done, she took a cold and formal leave.

This interview, as little cordial as my mother's behaviour was to me, had so good an effect on me, that I began perceptibly to mend from that hour. She sent indeed constantly to enquire how I did ; but avoided coming, lest, as she said, she should meet with Mr. Vere, whom she could never forgive. As soon as I was in a condition to go abroad, I went to pay my duty to her. She received me with civility, but no tenderness ;

nor has she ever from that time made me the least recompence for what I have lost ; her permitting me to see her, she thinks sufficient amends.

I did not chuse to return to Mr. Vere's house, as I had only a polite, not a kind invitation. One of his daughters, she who had been present at my marriage, and who always had shewn most affection towards me, was about this time married to a gentleman, whose estate lay in another county. When the bride went home, she pressed me to go with her so warmly, that I could not refuse her ; and during the time I staid with her, I received so many marks of tenderness from her, that I resolved to settle in her neighbourhood ; and have now a little house near her, where I have resided constantly ever since. I come once or twice a year to pay a visit to my mother, but my reception, as you may see, is always cold, and I seldom stay more than a few days,

Old Mr. Vere is dead ; and his daughters, who were coheiresses to his estate, are all married, so that the family is intirely dispersed ; but notwithstanding this, and the number of years that have passed ever since my marriage, my mother cannot yet endure the name of the family : and always, as you
may

may have observed, calls me by my maiden name.

I was much affected at the story of the amiable Mrs. Vere. The sweet melancholy, which predominates in her countenance, shews that the spirits, when broken in the bud of youth, are hardly to be recovered. What a tyrant this lady Grimston is! I did not admire her before, but I now absolutely dislike her. What a wife and a mother has she been to a husband and a daughter, who might have constituted the happiness of a woman of a different temper! And yet she passes for a wonderful good woman, and a pattern of all those virtues of a religion, which meekness and forgiveness characterise. She is mistaken, if she thinks that austerity is necessary to christianity. The most that my charity allows me to believe of such people is, that they impose on *themselves*, at a time when the most discerning perhaps think that they are endeavouring to impose on others.

What an angel is my good mother, when compared to this her friend, whom her humility makes her look upon as her superior in virtue! I am very angry with Sir George, who in his resentment said to me once, that she was like lady Grimston. I then knew
but

but little of that lady's character, or I should have reproved him for it.

I conjured Mrs. Vere to make her visit longer than she had at first intended. She told me, she would most gladly do it; but that it was a liberty she did not dare to take, unless her mother asked her to prolong it; which, she said, she possibly might do, in complaisance to me.

September 4.——My mother I find has made lady Grimston her confident in relation to my affairs; the dear woman never keeps her mind to herself on any subject. Lady Grimston highly applauds her conduct in that business; and bestowed a few civil words on me for my filial duty, intermixed with an ungrateful comparison of her own daughter's behaviour. And she consoled with herself, by saying, that *good parents* had not always *good children*. She told my mother, that she wished to see the child (meaning me) happily disposed of; for that, notwithstanding the prudence of my behaviour, the world would be apt to cast reflections on me, on account of the abruptness with which the match was broken off, without the true reasons being known: and my illness, she said, might be imputed to the disappointment; which might incline people to suspect the rejection had been on Mr. Faulkland's side.

What

What a provoking hint was this my dear ! it has really alarmed my mother, who depends much on the judgment of her friend, and has at the same time so nice a regard to the honour of her family. I wish that formal old woman would mind her own business.

September 6.——My mother and lady Grimston have had abundance of private confabulation these two days, from which Mrs. Vere and I am excluded. I wish there may not be some mischief a brewing. One thing, however, has given me pleasure ; lady Grimston has invited her daughter to stay at Grimston-hall as long as my mother and I continue here.

Mrs. Vere tells me, she suspects the subject of their conferences ; but she is perverse, and will not tell me what she thinks, for fear, as she says, she should have guessed wrong, and her surmises would only tease me.

September 10.——A packet sent me from London—A letter from Sir George—one from my Cecilia—and so soon too ! Welcome, welcome, thou faithful messenger, from the faithfullest of hearts !

Thou dear anticipating little prophets ! What put it into your head to call Mr. Arnold a new conquest, upon my but barely
menti-

mentioning him to you? I was just going to tell you all; and behold your own whimsical imagination has suggested the most material part to you already. You desire me to be sincere: was that necessary, my sister, from you to me? You say, you are *sure Mr. Arnold is, or will be my lover*; and insist on my being more particular in my description of him. What a strange girl you are! again I ask you, What put this into your head? What busy little spirit of intelligence flew to you with this news before I knew it myself? For as to the fact, it is but too certain.

This has been the subject of my mother's and lady Grimston's private conferences; and Mrs. Vere (sly thing as she is) guessed it. It seems Mr. Arnold disclosed his passion to lady Grimston, in order to ask her advice about it. She loves mightily to be consulted; and ill-starred as I am, did me the honour to recommend me strongly to him; and she has preposessed my mother too in favour of this new man. I wish the meddling old dame had been dumb. Now shall I go through another fiery tryal! Heaven help me, if lady Grimston were to be my judge! But my mother is all goodness.

Well,

Well, but you want a description of this man. I will give it you, though I have scarce patience to write about him. Indeed, Cecilia, I am vexed ; I foresee a great deal of trouble from that quarter. — But come, I will try what I can say.

The man is about thirty, genteel, and handsome enough ; at least he is reckoned so, and I believe I should think him so, if I were not angry with him. He is very like your brother Henry ; and you know he is an allowed handsome man. He seems to have plain good sense, and is good humoured, I believe : I do not know of what colour his eyes are, for I never looked much at him. Lady Grimston says he is a *scholar* (a thing she pretends to value highly), and a mighty sober, pious, worthy gentleman. He is of a very good family ; and has an estate of about fifteen hundred pounds a year, upon which there is a jointure of three hundred pounds a year, paid to his brother's widow. Part of the estate is in Kent, and part in this county of Essex, where he has a mansion-house, a well enough looking old-fashioned place, something in the Grimston-hall stile, at about a mile distance from this ; where he passes most of his time.

I have told you already, he plays divinely
on

on several instruments ; this is the only circumstance about him that pleases me.

He has not yet made his addresses to me in form ; yet we all know that he intends it, from his uncommon assiduity towards me ; but he has a sort of reserve about him, and loves to do every thing in his own way.

Bless me !—here he is—his chariot has just driven into the court ; and Mrs. Vere peeps in upon me, and with a most vexatious archness, bids me come down to the parlour ; but I will not, unless my mother desires me. I will go into the garden, to be for a while out of the way.

September 11. ——— Yesterday evening was productive of nothing but looks and compliments, and bows, and so forth ; except two or three delightful pieces of musick, which he executed incomparably. But this morning, my Cecilia, Oh ! this morning ! the man spoke out, told me in down-right plain English, that he loved me ! How insipid is such a declaration, when it comes from one, who is indifferent to us ! I do not know how it was, but instead of being abashed, I could have smiled in his face when he declared himself ; but you may be sure I did not, that would not have been pretty.

I was

I was sitting in the little drawing-room, reading, when he came in. To be sure he was sent to me by the antient ladies, otherwise he would not have intruded ; for the man is not ill-bred. The book happened to be Horace ; upon his entering the room, I laid it by ; he asked me politely enough, what were my studies. When I named the author, he took the book up, and opening the leaves, started, and looked me full in the face ; I coloured. My charming Miss Bidulph, said he, do you prefer this to the agreeable eetertainment of finishing this beautiful rose here, that seems to blush at your neglect of it ? He spoke this, pointing to a little piece of embroidery that lay in a frame before me. I was nettled at the question, it was too assuming. Sir, I hope I was as innocently, and as usefully employed ; and I assure you I give a greater portion of my time to my needle, than to my book.

You are so lovely, madam, that nothing you can do needs an apology. An apology, I'll assure you ! did not this look as if the man thought I ought to beg his pardon for understanding Latin ? For this accidental, and I think (to a woman) trivial accomplishment, I am indebted, you know, to Sir George ; who took so much pains with me,
the

the two or three summers he was indisposed at Sidney-Castle.

He then proceeded to tell me how much he admired, how much he loved me! and that having been encouraged by lady Grimston's assuring him that I was disengaged (observe that), he presumed to tell me so. Oh! thought I, perhaps thou art thyself a Grimstonian, and do not think it necessary that the heart should be consulted. I answered him mighty civilly, and mighty little to the purpose. Sir, I thank you for your favourable sentiments—Lady Grimston does me a great deal of honour—I think myself happy in her good opinion——But he was not to be so put off, he pressed me to give him hopes, as he called it. Alas! I have no hopes to give him. He said, he would not presume to mention his love to my mother, though lady Grimston pressed him to it (it was like her), 'till he had first declared himself to me. This was not indelicate; my heart thanked him for it, though I only returned him a bow. We were seasonably (to me at least) interrupted here, by the arrival of my friend the dean. He had come to see lady Grimston, just as Mr. Arnold had entered into conversation with me; the old gentleman had a mind to walk in the garden; the little drawing-room, where

where we were, opened into it, by a glass door ; so that lady Grimston and my mother were obliged to bring him that way. Though I was glad that the conversation was broke off, yet I could have wished that I had first had an opportunity of throwing a little cold water on Mr. Arnold's *hopes*, lest he should have put too favourable an interpretation on the reception I gave him, and mention the thing to my mother, before I had time to speak to her.

I was in some confusion at their entering the room. Mr. Arnold had at that minute laid hold of one of my hands, and I had but just time to withdraw it, when the door flew open to give entrance to the two ladies and the good man : the latter lifting up both his hands, as if conscious of having done something wrong, with a good-humoured freedom, asked pardon ; but with a look that seemed to indicate, he thought the apology necessary both to Mr. Arnold and me. This disconcerted me more ; my mother smiled, and lady Grimston drew up her long neck, and winked at the dean. I took up my hat, that lay in a window, without well-knowing what I did, and said, I would wait on them into the garden. Mr. Arnold followed my example ; but looked at me, I do not know how——impertinently——as if he thought
I did

I did not dislike him. I took one turn with them, and then slipped away, under pretence of going in to dress. I ran directly into Mrs. Vere's room, and told her what had passed between Mr. Arnold and me. She laughed, and said, she could have told me long ago it would have come to that. I knew Mr. Arnold admired you, said she, the first time I saw you in his company; he is no contemptible conquest I can tell you. He assured my mother, that you were the only woman he ever saw in his life that had made an impression on him; and I am inclined to believe him, for he is not a man of an amorous complexion; nor did I ever hear of his making his addresses to any one, though he might have his choice of the best fortunes, and the best families in the county; for the ladies, I must inform you, admire him exceedingly; and when you are known to be his choice, you will be the envy of all the young women in the county. I sighed, (I don't know why) and said, I desired not to create envy on that account. Mrs. Vere said, why really Miss Bidulph, if your heart is at liberty, I know of no man more worthy of it than Mr. Arnold; but perhaps (looking with a kind earnestness on me) that may not be your case. I told her, my heart was not engaged (as it really is not; for indeed,

deed, Cecilia, I do not think of Mr. Faulkland) ; but that I did not find in myself any great inclination towards Mr. Arnold. Oh ! my dear, said she, if you find no disinclination, it is enough. I married for love, yet I was far from being happy. The vexation that I occasioned in my own and my husband's family, was a counter-balance to the satisfaction of possessing the man I loved. Mr. Arnold, besides being very amiable in his person, has good sense, and good temper ; and if you marry him with nothing more than indifference, gratitude will soon produce love in such a breast as yours. Were there any thing like aversion in your heart, then indeed it would be criminal in you to accept of him.

Mrs. Vere delivered her sentiments with such a calm sweetness, such a disinterested sincerity, that what she said made an impression on me. We are apt, contrary as it may seem to reason, to be more wrought upon by the opinion and advice of young people like ourselves, than by that of persons, whose experience certainly gives them a better right to form judgments : but we have a sort of a natural repugnance to the being dictated to, even by those who have an authority to do it ; and as age gives a superiority, every thing that comes from it carries

ries a sort of air of prescribing, which we are wonderfully inclined to reject.

Had lady Grimston said this to me, it would have put me upon my guard, as suspecting a design on my liberty of choice. Even my good mother might have been listened to on this subject not without uneasiness; though my duty to her would not suffer me to give her a moment's pain, unless I was sure that my eternal as well as temporal happiness was at stake.

I told Mrs. Vere that I had no aversion to Mr. Arnold; on the contrary, that if I had a sister, I should wish her married to him. Now, my Cecilia, the mischief of it is, there *can* be no reasonable objection made to him: he is a very tolerable man; but I knew a man once that I liked better—but fye, fye upon him! I am sure I ought not to like him, and therefore I will not. I am positive, if I were let alone, I should be as happy as ever.

I told you I got a letter from my brother; he says in it, he has had one from Mr. Faulkland, who is now in your part of the world. He tells Sir George, that ‘if my lady Biddulph will be so good as to see Miss B. and converse with her, he is not without hopes that she may so far exculpate him, as to induce my lady to repeal his sentence of banishment.’

‘nishment.’ Sir George adds his own wishes for this, but says (to give you *his* words) he fears the wench will not be honest enough to do Faulkland justice——justice! what can my brother mean by this? How ungenerous these men are, even the best of them, in love matters! He knows the poor girl doats on her destroyer, and might perhaps take shame to *herself*, rather than throw as much blame on him as he deserves. I think this is all the justice that can be expected from her; and how poor an extenuation would this make of his guilt! It would only add to the merit of *her* sufferings, without lessening his fault.

To what purpose then would it be? I know my mother’s sentiments already on that head. I would not shew Sir George’s letter to her, he had said so many ridiculous things about lady Grimston in it, which I know would have offended her highly; otherwise, on account of Mr. Faulkland’s paragraph, I should have been glad she had seen it.

September 12.——Ah! my sister! my friend! What shall I do? Oh! that officious lady Grimston——What ill star drove me to her house? Nothing would serve her but she must know what Mr. Arnold said to me in the drawing-room conference; and
how

how I had behaved. She made her enquiry before my mother and the dean, after I had left them in the garden. What could the man do? He had no reason to conceal what passed, and frankly owned he had made me an offer of his heart. Well, and how did Miss receive it, asked lady Grimston? With that modesty and polite sweetness that she does every thing, answered Mr. Arnold. He could say no less.

He thence took occasion to apply particularly to my mother, apologizing at the same time for his not having done it before. What the self-sufficient creature added, I know not; for my mother, from whom I had this account, did not repeat all he said; but it seems it was enough to make her imagine I had not heard him reluctantly, and accordingly she gave him her permission to win me and wear me.

I could cry for very vexation, to be made such a puppet of. This eclaircissement I dreaded before I had time to explain myself to my mother. That best of women, still anticipating what I had to say, congratulated me on my extraordinary prudence, in not letting a childish misplaced attachment keep such a hold on my heart, as to make me blind to the merits of a more deserving object.

Dear

Dear madam, said I, sure Mr. Arnold did not say that I encouraged his addresses. Encouraged, my dear ! why sure the hearing, from a young lady of your education, is encouragement enough to a man of sense. — I heard him with complaisance, madam, because I thought *that* due to him ; but I had not time to tell him, that it was my wish to remain single, at least for some time. My mother looked surprized. “ Sidney, this is not what I expected from you ; I flattered myself you thought no longer of Mr. Faulkland.”

She contracted her brow a little. Madam, I do not ; indeed I think no more of him ; but may I not be permitted to continue as I am ?

Had you never had any engagement with Mr. Faulkland, answered my mother, I should be far from urging you on this occasion ; but circumstanced as you now are, I think your honour is concerned.

Lady Grimston has put your affair in such a light to me, as I never considered it in before. How mortifying must the reflection be, my dear, to think that it may be said Mr. Faulkland perhaps flew off, from some disadvantageous circumstance he discovered in regard to you. The world wants not envious, malicious tongues enough to give it this turn. Your unlucky illness, and your

brother's ill-timed assiduity in going so often to him when he was at Richmond, looks as if we had been endeavouring to recall him. Every body knows the marriage was almost concluded; and lady Grimston, though she thinks our reasons for breaking it off were extremely cogent, yet as she knows the world well, thinks it has not virtue enough to believe those to be the true reasons, and that it will be much more apt to put an invidious construction on the affair, that may be very detrimental to you in your future prospects. These considerations alone ought to determine you; but there is one still of greater moment, which I hope, from the goodness of your heart, will have still greater weight with you. That unfortunate young lady, who *ought* to be the wife of Mr. Faulkland, if you were once put beyond the reach even of his most distant hope, would stand the better chance for having justice done to her; at least it would leave him void of that pretence which he at first pleaded, and which probably he will continue to do, while you remain single. Think seriously of the matter, my love. I shall only add, that Mr. Arnold is every way an unexceptionable match, and that your acceptance of him will be extremely agreeable to me; as on the contrary, your refusal will give an uneasiness

to your indulgent mother, which she never yet experienced from you.

She left me with these cruel words, cruel in their kindness—Oh! she knows I am flexible by nature, and to *her* will, yielding as air. What can I do? My heart is not in a disposition to love—Yet again and again I repeat it, Mr. Faulkland has no interest there. What he once had he has lost; but I cannot compel it to like, and unlike, and like anew at pleasure. Fain would I bring myself cheerfully to conform to my mother's will, for I have no will of my own. I never knew what it was to have one, and never shall, I believe; for I am sure I will not contend with a husband.

I have told Mrs. Vere what my mother said to me; she is entirely of her mind; every body is combined against me; I am treated like a baby, that knows not what is fit for it to chuse, or to reject.

September 15.—I have been searching my heart, my dear Cecilia, to try if there remained a lurking particle of my former flame unextinguished; a flame I call it, as we are allowed the metaphor, but it never rose to *that*; it was but a single ray, a gentle glow that just warmed my breast without scorching: what it might have arisen to, I will not say; but I have the satisfaction to

find that the short-lived fire is quite extinct, and the mansion is even chilled with cold.

This was a very necessary scrutiny, before I would even entertain a thought of Mr. Arnold; and, believe me, had I found it otherwise than I say, I would rather have hazarded my mother's displeasure by owning the truth to her, than injure any man, by giving him my hand with an estranged heart.

I will acknowledge to you, my sister, that it was not without a struggle I reduced my mind to this frame. My heart (foolish thing) industrious to perplex itself, would fain have suggested some palliating circumstances in Mr. Faulkland's favour; but I forbid it to interpose. Trifler, said I, let your guardian, your proper guide, judge and determine for you in this important cause, whereon so much of your future peace depends. It sighed, but had the virtue to submit; and I arraigned Faulkland before a little tribunal in my breast, where I would suffer reason only to preside. The little felon, love, knocked at the door once or twice, but justice kept him out; and after a long (and I think a fair) tryal, he was at length cast; and in order to strengthen my resolves, and justify my mother's, as well as my own conduct, these are the arguments which I have deduced from the evidences against him.

If

If Mr. Faulkland feared the frailty of his virtue, why did he not fly when he was first alarmed with the knowledge of the lady's passion for him? If not for his own sake, yet at least for her's. If he could not return her love, was he not cruel in suffering her to feed a hopeless flame? But since his evil fate urged him on, and the unhappy girl lost her honour, was he not bound to repair it? He had never seen me at that time, was under no personal engagements to me, and might easily have acquitted himself to my brother, from so justifiable a motive.

What if I had married him, ignorant of this secret, and it had afterwards come to my ears, how miserable would it have made me, to think that I had stood between an unfortunate young creature and her happiness? For had Mr. Faulkland never heard of me, had he not been prejudiced in my favour, this young woman's beauty and innocence (which he acknowledges) might have then engaged his honest vows; the wicked aunt would not have been tempted to betray her trust, nor he (shocking thought! whenever it recurs) to buy that favour he might have obtained on virtuous terms. His prior engagements to my brother was the fatal plea that undid them both! Had he not been furnished with this excuse, her hopes might have supported her virtue; or, if ignorant

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of

of this, she fell, what pretence could he offer, after the injury *was* done, for not fulfilling an obligation of so much more importance? I could not have suffered by not obtaining a man I never saw; Miss B. is undone by losing him: yet his word to Sir George, the breach of which could have been attended with no ill consequence, was to be preferred to an act of justice. This is that false honour upon which the men pique themselves so much. An innocent child stigmatized; an amiable woman abandoned to shame and grief! I thank Heaven I made not myself accessory to this. *Had* I married Mr. Faulkland, *knowing* his fault, I could not say so, nor have blamed any thing but my own imprudence, If *I* in my turn found myself deserted. Who knows 'but he might (after having bound me in chains,) return to his neglected mistress; and *that* love, which, when it would have been meritorious in him, he disrelished, he might have pursued with eagerness when interdicted. This might have been the case. I believe you may remember an instance of it among our acquaintance. Mr. Saunders who refused a young lady for his bride, from an absolute dislike of her person, took uncommon pains to debauch her when she became the wife of his friend. Had Mr. Faulkland so behaved, what a wretch would it have made me! you know

know I have not a grain of jealousy in my composition, yet I am sure a neglect of this kind would make me very miserable.

You have not forgot, I believe, that about two years ago there was a match proposed to my mother by the bishop of B. between me and his nephew. The young man was heir to a good fortune, was reckoned handsome and accomplished, and I think he really was so: I was entirely free from prepossessions in favour of any one, and had no objection to him, but that I knew he had a most lamentably-vulnerable heart, for he had been in love with two or three women of my acquaintance. My mother mentioned him to me upon the good old prelate's recommendation, and I gave her this as my reason for disliking the offer, which she approved of so intirely, that the thing went no farther. Indeed I think that woman is a fool, who risques her contentment with one of a light disposition. Marriage will not change men's natures; and it is not every one who has virtue or prudence enough to be reclaimed. Upon the whole, I am satisfied with my lot; and am sure I could hear with pleasure, that Mr. Faulkland was married to that Miss B. I wish I knew the other letters that compose her name.

September 16.——My mother asked me to-day, had I considered of what she

had been saying to me? I told her I had, and only begged a little more time. She kissed me, with tears in her eyes. To be sure, my dear, as much as you can reasonably desire. I know my Sidney is above trifling. Mrs. Vere was present when my mother left the room. Oh! Miss Bidulph, said she, who would refuse to gratify such a parent as that? Had *my* mother condescended to treat me so, I am sure she could have wrought on me to do any thing she liked, even though it had been repugnant to my inclination. Dear madam, I replied, how sweetly you inforce my duty—Yes, I will obey that kindest best of mothers. I believe I spoke this, tho' without intending it, in a tone that implied something like making a merit of this concession; for Mrs. Vere immediately answered, There's a good child! that to oblige its mama, will accept of a very handsome young gentleman, with a good estate, and one that many a girl in England would give her eyes for. I felt the rebuke; but turning it off with a smile, said, but you forget, my dear, that I am not dying for him.

September 20.—How will you plume yourself on your sagacity, Cecilia, when you read this account of my love, which you so wisely foretold? I can tell you I am trying to like Mr. Arnold as fast as I can; I make him sing and play for this purpose
from

from morning 'till night, for he is here every day, and all day. Lady Grimston holds her head a quarter of a yard higher than she did before; and looks, as who should say, it was *I* that brought this about. The dean is as frolick as May-day upon it; for he is very fond of Mr. Arnold; but tells him he will not forgive him for robbing him of his second wife; for such, he says, he intended me. I think his daughter (a pretty girl of about seventeen) looks a little grave of late. I hope she does not like Mr. Arnold herself. I wish my mother would take it into her head that she was in love with him, and that Mr. Arnold had promised to marry her; then should I a second time crown me with a willow garland. But there is no fear of this, or rather no hope.

Lady Grimston has given my mother *such* a character of Mr. Arnold, that if you will take her word for it, there is not a man like him in the world; and my mother firmly believes every syllable she says. She told me to-day she would write to Sir George, to give him an account of the matter, and desire his advice. This is a compliment she would not omit paying, for any consideration, tho' I know my brother's judgment has now lost all credit with her; and that, let his opinion be what it will, she is firmly resolved on her new plan. Knowing as you

do my mother's firmness, when once she is possessed with a thing, you would not wonder that I did not make attempts to alter her mind, which I knew would be fruitless. She likes Mr. Arnold prodigiously; she piques herself on her skill in physiognomy, and says, if she is deceived in this Gentleman, she will never again rely on this science. Lady Grimston is so fond of him, that I wonder she did not marry him herself.

September 23.——We have received two letters from Sir George; one in answer to my mother's, the other to me. I will give them both to you: the following is a copy of that to my mother:

Madam,

I thank you for the honour you do me in asking my advice, in regard to the proposal of marriage you have received for my sister; but I am entirely disqualified from giving you any, as I am an absolute stranger both to the person and character of the gentleman you mention; and know no more of him, than that I have heard there is such a person, who has some estate in the county where you are.

As you are absolute mistress of your daughter's will, as well of her person, I shall not presume to interfere in this nice point. If the marriage is not *already* agreed upon (which may be the case, notwithstanding the compliment

Miss Sidney Bidulph. 155

compliment you do me the favour to pay me,) I think it would be generous in you to see Miss B. and hear what she has to say, before you proceed farther; but in this, as in every thing else, your own discretion must guide you.

I am,

Madam,

Your affectionate son,

and most obedient servant,

London,

GEORGE BIDULPH.

Sept. 22.

My mother was exceedingly displeased with this Letter. She said Sir George had a haughtiness in him that was very offensive to her. I have acquitted myself in applying to him, and shall give myself no farther trouble about him, or his opinion. As for Miss B. I think she can hardly be under a necessity of coming to town as yet, and that affair may keep cold, for I have but little curiosity to hear what the poor soul may be prompted to say, as I am sure I shall be time enough to afford her any assistance she may stand in need of. This was the whole of her observation. My brother's letter to me is as follows:

Dear Sidney,

I received with concern (though I own not with surprize) an account from my mother, of a new treaty of marriage that is on foot between

between you and a Mr. Arnold, of whom I know nothing. Instead of congratulating you on this occasion, I cannot help condoling with you; for I have a better opinion of your heart than to suppose it can have so soon renounced poor Faulkland. I do not reproach you for your acquiescence in giving him up, I *know* you could not do otherwise; but why in the name of precipitancy, are you to be hurried into wedlock already? You went into the country to recover your health, I thought; prithee how comes this new husband into your way? I know, child, it is not of your seeking, and do from my heart pity you.

I would by no means have you guilty of a breach of duty to our mother; but for Heaven's sake, why don't you try your influence over her, to have this sudden scheme of matrimony suspended, 'till she sees and talks to this girl that Faulkland refers her to? If the wench owns that he was not to blame so much as she herself was, and relinquishes all pretensions to him, don't you think she (my mother I mean) would, in that case, remain bound in honour to yield you to his prior claim?

Indeed, Sidney, I must blame you for this part of your conduct; it looks like a strange insensibility in you.

I know

I know you will urge a perfect submission to your mother's will ; and I know too, that *will* is as absolute as that of an Eastern monarch. I therefore repeat it, I do not mean to reproach you with your compliance, but I am vexed to the heart, and must give it vent.

I see plainly that old piece of formality, lady Grimston's infernal shrivelled paw in all this. For my Mother of herself, I am sure, would not have thought of disposing of you, without your liking, so soon after an affair that had created you so much uneasiness, unless it had been suggested to her by somebody. Prithee tell me what sort of a man this Arnold really is, for I do not depend on the partial representations I have had of him.

I wish Miss B. was come to town, but she is not yet arrived. I enquired for her of Mr. Faulkland's housekeeper, by the name of Jefferis. The woman is at the house at Putney waiting to receive her, but does not know how soon she will come. Would she had been buried before Faulkland saw her!

I shall expect a letter from you soon. How comes it that you never mentioned Mr. Arnold to me in any that you have writ? But I excuse you, and am

Your affectionate brother,

London, Sept. 22.

G. B.

You

You see this is Sir George himself, my dear, a mixture of petulancy and indelicacy. There is one thing in him, however, commendable; his steady adherence to his friend's interests. You find how impossible for me it is to shew such a letter to my mother: by his strange unguarded manner of writing, which he does not consider, he defeats his own purposes; for if any use could be made of that part of his letter relative to Miss B. I could not shew my mother part, without letting her see the whole: but that is not to be done; and I can only thank my good fortune that I received this, and the last letter from him, without her knowledge.

I will now give you my answer to this letter, which I wrote, by the return of the post.

Dear Brother,

I thank you for your condolences, but can assure you my heart is not in such a situation as to require any. I own I had all the esteem for Mr. Faulkland, which I thought his merit deserved. Duty to my good mother, and an undeniable blemish in his character, first wrought a change in my sentiments towards him: my own peace of mind now requires me to improve that change into indifference.

You

You do me justice in supposing that I should never think of seeking a husband ; and you have formed as right a judgment in regard to lady Grimston's being the promoter of this union. As for Mr. Arnold, though perhaps (had I never known your friend) he might not have been the man of my choice, yet have I no dislike to him. I believe him to be a very worthy gentleman ; and that my mother has not been partial in her representations. I am sure, at least, she has said nothing of him but what she has seen, or been told, and has good reason to believe.

I wish, dear brother, you had writ with more caution, that I might have laid before my mother what you said in relation to Miss B. It may have its weight with me, though I cannot answer for its having any with her. Do you forget her having told me, that she conceived a sort of horror at the thoughts of my marrying Mr. Faulkland ? She cannot but be sensible, that Miss B. is not without her share of blame in that affair, which has so perplexed us all. But you know too that does not exculpate Mr. Faulkland. The young lady's relinquishing her hopes (for a claim I think she does not make), would only the more excite my mother's compassion, and interest her in her favour. To sum up the whole in one word, my mother

ther is resolved, and you yourself acknowledge that her will is absolute. She has used the most irresistible argument to obtain my consent, *viz.* that it would make *her* happy. Spare then, my dear brother, unkind reflections on any part of my behaviour; for I am determined to pursue, through life, that rule of conduct, which I have hitherto invariably adhered to; I mean that of preferring to my own the happiness of those who are most dear to me.

I am, &c.

September 25. — Mr. Arnold has so many advocates here, that his interest cannot fail of being promoted. Mrs. Vere admires him; the Dean commends him; my mother praises him; lady Grimston extols him to the skies. No one is silent, but the young girl that I mentioned to you before; she only colours and hangs down her head when he is spoken of. I really begin to fear that the poor thing loves him; but he never made any addresses to her, and I hope does not suspect it.

Things are now gone so far, that my mother and lady Grimston talked to day of settlements. Mr. Arnold receives but twelve hundred pounds a year from his estate: his brother's widow, as I have already told you, having a jointure upon it of three hundred pounds a year. She lives entirely in London,

don, and is, I am told, a very imprudent woman, and not all esteemed by the family. The elder Mr. Arnold and she were married several years, but never had a child; the last two years of his life his wife and he lived separate, her conduct having given room for some suspicions, very injurious to her husband's honour.

The Arnold estate was originally a very considerable one, but has been dissipated by the extravagance of the successive possessors. What remains, however, is quite clear, and is likely to be kept so by the good management of the present owner. His late brother was exceedingly remiss in his affairs, and spent most of his time in London; and if it had not been for Mr. Arnold, the mansion-house would have fallen to the ground; but his brother lent it to him, and he kept it in repair for his own use, as he is fond of the place: though he has a pretty house in Kent, belonging to another estate of about three hundred pounds a year, which came to him by his mother, for he is the son of a second marriage. And this, 'till his brother's death, was the whole of his income; but he is so good an œconomist, that he always made a genteeler figure on his three hundred pounds a year, than his brother did in twelve.

My

My mother, who you know is integrity itself, thinks that I ought not to have more settled on me than the widow of Mr. Arnold's brother had, whose fortune was superior to mine. Mr. Arnold makes a much handsomer proposal; lady Grimston is for laying hold of it. The Dean was for striking a medium. I do not care how they settle it; but I fancy my mother will have her own way in this.

She purposes going to town next week, that the wedding—(bless me! whose wedding is it that I am talking of so coolly?) well—that it may be celebrated in her own house. This to be sure will send Sir George directly out of it. I cannot help it; I am born to give, and to receive vexation.

Mr. Arnold speaks of taking a house in London, where my mother is to have an apartment whenever she chuses to be in town. This is a pleasing circumstance to me; and she likewise proposes our being sometimes with her at Sidney-castle. That is a prospect which loses much of its charms, by the reflection that my dear Cecilia is not there.

October 1.—All preliminaries are settled. There has been a fuss with parchments this week past. My mother has carried her point, in regard to the jointure; and has made choice of that little estate in
Kent

Kent to be settled on me, as it is a complete three hundred pounds a year, detached entirely from the rest, and has a pretty house on it. This was all she would accept of, though, to do Mr. Arnold justice, he would have been much more liberal; but, my mother says, a single woman, bred in retirement as I have been, who cannot live on that, does not deserve to live at all; adding, that the estate was already subject to one jointure, and the widow so young a woman; if it should be also my misfortune to become one early, a great part of the fortune would be swallowed by dowagers, and the heir not have enough to support his rank.

October 2.—This morning my mother, lady Grimston, the Dean, and Mr. Arnold (who is the idol of them all) took a rumbling together in the old coach, by way of taking the air, in a dusty road; and what do you think was the result of their deliberations in this jaunt? Why truly lady Grimston, proud of her handy work, would needs see it accomplished; and nothing will serve her, but I must be married at her house. My mother opposed it at first; but the Dean seconded the proposal, that he might have (as he expressed himself) the satisfaction of contributing *himself* to make Mr. Arnold happy; and Mr. Arnold (audacioufly

daciouſly expecting, I ſuppoſe, that this would haſten the ceremony) joined his intreaties ſo effectually, that my mother was obliged to yield.

What a tormenting old woman is this lady Grimſton ! I hoped, at leaſt, for the reſpite of a month, by getting to London. I thought firſt to have delayed the time of our going to town, and then to have faddled away a while longer under pretence of preparations ; though there is but little room for that now, as all my fineries, deſtined I thought to another purpoſe, are lying quietly in my trunks at home. But then one might have contrived many little occaſions of delay. There was a houſe to be fixed upon, and I had twenty things to do, and, as my mother ſays, many things fall out between the cup and the lip. But all my expectations are blown away, and I have but one poor fortnight given me to recollect my ſcattered thoughts, when they are all to be centered in Mr. Arnold. I am not merry, my Cecilia, but I am determined not to appear ſad ; neither am I ſo ; I hope I have no reaſon.

My mother purpoſes writing again to Sir George, to deſire his preſence at my marriage. I hope he will behave reſpectfully to every one here, if he ſhould come.

October

October 5.—Mr. Arnold has writ to town, to bespeak a new chariot; he will do nothing in regard to the house, 'till I am on the spot to please myself. I intend sending Patty to town, to bring me down my bridal trappings.

Mr. Arnold has given some necessary orders for the new decking of his person, as well as some of the apartments in the old mansion-house, which seem a little to want refurnishing; most of the goods having been inhabitants there since the time of his great grand-father.

October 9.—My mother's last letter to Sir George has produced the following answer, which he sent down by Patty, when she returned down here with my cloaths.

Madam,

I am sorry I cannot accept of the invitation you favour me with, to be present at my sister's nuptials. Some affairs in Wiltshire require my immediate attendance; and I had settled matters before I received your summons, so as to set out as on this day. I wish you all imaginable satisfaction in your new son-in-law; and my sister abundance of happiness in her spouse.

I am, Madam, &c.

London, Oct. 8.

I am

I am glad Sir George does not come down; I am sure if he did, his behaviour would be such, as would render him no very acceptable guest at Grimston-hall.

A week, but a short week, to come, before my fate is irrevocably fixed; or revocable only by the hand of death! This reflection, solemn as it is, does not alarm me; because, after again calling my heart to the strictest account, I think I *can* pronounce it entirely free. Mr. Arnold will soon have an indisputable right to it; and it is my firm purpose to use my utmost endeavours to give him entire possession of it. He every day gains upon my esteem. If his talents are not so glittering as I have seen some others possessed of, he is nevertheless master of an exceedingly good understanding, which a sort of diffidence in his manner does not suffer him to shew at once to the best advantage. His temper is extremely sweet, and he seems to have an openness of heart (when he throws off a little shyness which he has contracted) that is exceedingly engaging. His love for me appears as fervent as I believe it sincere; and I should be ungrateful not to do my utmost to return it.

October 14. — How precipitate has been my fortune? Twice within these three months have I been almost at the eve of
my

my intended nuptials. Those which *were* to have been, I thought as certain as those which are *now* to be solemnized within two days. Who knows what may still happen to frustrate our present designs?—No—there is not another Miss B. to interpose. Mr. Arnold seems to be one of those who are born to pass quietly through life. He has already attained to the age of thirty, without one event ever happening to him, but such as happen to every man every day. May no future storm ever interrupt his or my tranquillity! for they will soon be one and the same thing.

October 16.—The die is thrown, my Cecilia, and thy Sidney is the wife of Mr. Arnold! This day we were married; the good dean joined our hands, and his daughter was one of my bride-maids. The poor girl was taken ill during the ceremony, and was obliged to leave the church, which has confirmed me in my suspicions—Oh! how I pity her! I believe indeed she only feigned illness for an excuse to retire. Mrs. Vere went out with her; but she would not suffer her to attend her home. She promised to dine with us, if she should be better; and so she did, and seemed chearful and pretty well; but I thought she looked as if she had been crying. She made my heart ache—but I am in hopes it is but a slight wound; she

she is exceedingly lively, and, I dare say, will soon get the better of it.

Lady Grimston was downright tiresome with her compliments: and preached an hour long about the duty of children to their parents; and how good a wife that woman was likely to make, who had always been exemplary in her filial obedience. Ah! lady Grimston, thought I, by what I have heard of you, you did not seem to number obedience amongst wife-like virtues in your own case, though you can preach it up to others. But I knew this sermon was chiefly intended for poor Mrs. Vere's use. My mother was all kindness and complacency. She seemed so delighted, that I rejoiced in having had it in my power to give her so much happiness. Lady Grimston did the honours of her house on this occasion with great magnificence, and I believe I need not tell you, with most exquisite decorum. Indeed this wedding was conducted with such a decent festivity, so rationally on all sides, and such a comfortable privacy, that I was not half so much shocked as I expected to have been.

We have no company here besides the family of the house, my dear good old Dean, his lady and daughter, one young lady more, and a relation of Mr. Arnold's; a gentleman who came from London on purpose

purpose to be present on this (as it is called) joyful occasion.

We shall leave this house to-morrow, Mr. Arnold and I, I mean. I am to be put into possession of the old mansion of Arnold-abbey. My mother is to continue with lady Grimston a week or a fortnight longer, and then she goes to London on no other call, as she says, but to see and administer comfort to poor Miss B. who she supposes will be by that time come to her retreat.

I believe I shall remain in the country while the weather continues pleasant, but am not yet determined.

October 17. — We took leave of lady Grimston this morning, or rather of her house; for her ladyship, my dear mother, and all the good folks that were our guests at Grimston-hall, are to dine with us to-day at Arnold-abbey. I desired I might be permitted to go home without any parade, and in as private a manner as possible; for you know how I hate a bustle. Mr. Arnold very obligingly indulged me in this request, and conducted my sweet Mrs. Vere and me home in his own coach, at eight of the clock this morning. I found every thing in exact order at Arnold-abbey. The house is very spacious and convenient, though very old-fashioned. Some of the rooms however are newly fitted up, perfectly neat and handsome.

The servants are orderly and well-behaved, and every thing seems to be exactly well regulated. You may be sure I have taken my own Patty home with me ; I intend to constitute her house-keeper, and give her an additional salary for her additional trouble. Mr. Arnold had nobody in that capacity before, as his household had not been settled since the acquisition of his fortune, and he reserved the chusing of so material a domestic to me ; but as I do not love to multiply servants, and know that Patty is very capable of the place, I shall take no other.

October 21.——Visitors still in abundance: all the gentry in the neighbourhood for some miles about have been to pay us their compliments ; at least, I hope by this time they have *all* been here, for we have not had a minute to ourselves these three days. It will make me up ten to return them, as many of the families live at a good distance from hence.

Mr. Arnold, whose mourning has been laid aside since our wedding-day, seems to have a very good taste in dress ; he is perfectly well shaped, and appears to great advantage in colours ; in short, he is more amiable than I thought he was. It is with great pleasure that I observe my young acquaintance, on whose heart I feared Mr. Arnold had made an impression, has recovered her usual

usual vivacity. With people extremely full of spirits, love is not apt to sink very deep, or last long, when it does not meet with a return.

October 30. — My mother sets out for London to-morrow, and Mr. Arnold has proposed to me, that he and I should accompany her. He says, he wants to look out for a house, and should like to fix in one before the winter advances; and that we may take up our abode at my mother's 'till our house is ready for us. My mother is charmed at this proposal: she dreads the thoughts of parting with me; and as she intends going (after a convenient stay in London) down to Sidney-castle, if I remain here, our separation must be immediate. I know this is Mr. Arnold's kind reason for desiring me to go; he thinks I shall be less affected at parting with my mother, when in the midst of the various scenes which London affords, than I should be if I were to continue here. He gives not this for a reason, but I know it is his true one; for he is not fond of London himself, especially at a season of the year, when the country is so much more agreeable. I thanked him for this mark of his tenderness, and am determined to go.

October 31. — Once more returned to London in very good spirits, after a
I 2 stay

stay of little more than two months in Essex, in which time so material and unexpected a change has been made in my condition.

Lady Grimston took a most affectionate leave of my mother, and asked her, with more tenderness than I thought her capable of, How many ages it would be before they should meet again? As for Mr. Arnold and me, she considers us as her neighbours. The Dean pleases himself with that expectation too; and the dear Mrs. Vere, who shed tears at bidding me adieu, promises herself the happiness (as she kindly expressed herself) of spending many delightful days with me next summer. She set out on her return to her own house, at the same time that we left ours to go to town.

My brother is still in Wiltshire; but I find he did not leave town at the time he mentioned in his letter to my mother, nor for some days after. This Patty learnt from the servants; but I hope it will not come to my mother's ears, for she would take it extremely ill of him.

Mr. Arnold, for the first time, mentioned, that he was very much disappointed in not having had the honour of seeing Sir George at his house in the country; but he hoped, when he came to town, his brother and he should make up for this,
by

by being the more together. I wish Sir George may behave as he ought to this deserving brother. Mr. Arnold little imagines how much he was an enemy to the match, and much less his reason for it. I should be very sorry Mr. Arnold were to know how near I was being married to another man; it might give a delicate mind pain, lest there should remain any traces of this former attachment in the breast of the woman he loves; but I hope there is no danger of his hearing of it, certainly no one would be so indiscreet as to mention it to him. Mr. Arnold has lived chiefly in the country, and may never have heard of Mr. Faulkland, as he was so short a time returned from his travels, on which he had been absent more than five years; and as he is now out of the kingdom, probably he will not be spoken of. I have begged of my mother, who is naturally communicative, never to name Mr. Faulkland to Mr. Arnold, and have given my reasons for desiring this. She says, she thinks it would be better to tell him the whole affair at once; but I cannot agree with her in that opinion; and have at last prevailed on her to promise me she will not speak of it.

November 2.——My mother drove out in my new chariot to-day (a very fine gay one it is), and went to Putney, to enquire

after Miss B. by the name of Mrs. Jefferis. She soon found the house, a very neat box, with a pretty garden behind it. The door was opened by a servant maid ; and my mother being told the lady was at home, sent in her name ; and was immediately conducted up stairs into a very elegant little dressing-room, where the lady was sitting at her toilet ; and Mr. Faulkland's housekeeper (whom my mother had seen before) assisting to dress her head. On my mother's entering the room, Miss B. rose off her chair, and soon discovered by her shape (for she was without her stays), that it was high time for her to seek a place of concealment. The housekeeper immediately withdrew ; and the young lady seemed in the utmost confusion ; my mother says, she herself was at a loss how to begin the conversation, but Miss B. relieved her, and spoke first. She thanked her for the honour she did her by so charitable a visit, which, she said, Mr. Faulkland had long ago made her hope for ; and which she must consider as the greatest consolation in her present unhappy circumstances.

My mother placed herself by her. Madam, said she, Mr. Faulkland made it a point with me before he left England, that I should see you, and afford you all the assistance in my power, or that you should stand
in

in need of. You seem to be commodiously situated here, and I understand have a very careful good woman to attend you.

I have so, madam, she answered ; but the most material circumstance is wanting to my relief : Mr. Faulkland ! — He is not here. Tears started into her eyes as she spoke. You were apprised of his absence, said my mother, before you came to town. I was, madam, and with the cause of it ; she hung down her head, and was silent.

My mother reassumed the conversation. She told her, she thought it a most providential discovery, that had given her the knowledge of Mr. Faulkland's ill behaviour, time enough to prevent his marriage with her daughter ; assuring her, she would not, for the universe, have had me the wife of a man under such ties, as she must consider Mr. Faulkland to be. Miss B. brightened up a little upon my mother's saying this. Did Mr. Faulkland ever tell you, madam, how the unhappy affair happened ? My mother told her, she knew not particulars ; that she had been referred to her for a full explanation ; that Mr. Faulkland had always endeavoured to excuse himself, and went so far as to say, He was sure the lady herself would acquit him in a great measure. Ah ! madam ! Miss B. cried, and shook her head. 'Tis as I suspected, said my mother, Mr.

Faulkland is an ungenerous man. A young lady of your modest appearance, I am sure he must have taken more pains to seduce, than he will acknowledge. Miss B. blushed exceedingly — Oh! madam, you have a charitable, generous heart, I was *indeed* seduced. I knew it, replied my mother. Did he promise to marry you? She coloured deeper than before. I will not accuse him of that, madam. My mother proceeded; You have a relation, madam; I understand she was accessary to your misfortune. Yes, the barbarous woman, answered the lady, she was the contriver of my destruction; and if I could have avoided it, I would never have seen her face again. Tears of grief and indignation again burst from her eyes. Have comfort, madam, said my mother, all may end well yet. I can have no hopes, answered Miss B. Mr. Faulkland flies me, you see, nor can I ever expect to recover his heart, since so charming a young lady, as I hear Miss Bidulph is, has possession of it; and though your goodness disappointed him in his late views, he may not yet despair. I found by this, continued my mother, that Miss B. knew nothing of your being married, and I made haste to tell her. I never saw joy so visible in a countenance. She clasped her hands together; Dear madam! what do you tell me? How
you

you revive my drooping heart ! then I am not *quite* hopeless, there is a *possibility* in my favour.

She then asked my mother if Mr. Faulkland had acquainted her with her real name, or that of her relation. My mother, who had once or twice called her by the name of Jefferis, assured her he had not. That was generous in him, said she ; he *can* be generous in *some* points. But I have no reason to conceal it from so prudent and worthy a lady as you are ; my real name is Burchell ; that of my cruel relation I will forbear to mention, out of respect to my good uncle, whose wife she is. Mr. Faulkland, she added, left a Bill of five hundred pounds with his house-keeper, to provide every thing for me that I should want ; with assurances that he would take the tenderest care of — the poor young creature hesitated, and could proceed no farther ; but my mother said she understood her meaning. They had a good deal more discourse : my mother promised to see her often during her confinement, and took her leave.

She tells me, she is exceedingly pretty, and has such an air of innocence and simplicity, as very much engages one in her favour.

I have set down this whole conversation, with every other particular, exactly as my mother related it.

She, who has a most circumstantial memory, repeated it word for word ; and I, from a custom of throwing upon paper every thing that occurs to me, have habituated myself to retain the minutest things.

I know not, my dear, whether you will be of my opinion ; but I cannot help thinking, that there was something like art in Miss Burchell's behaviour, far from that candour which Mr. Faulkland seemed to expect from her. My mother mentioned the *pains* that she supposed had been taken to *seduce* her ; her deep blush at this hint, makes me suspect that her answer was not dictated by sincerity. She saw my mother was not acquainted with particulars, and that she was willing to pass a favourable judgment on her fault ; it looks to me as if she laid hold of this prejudice—and yet she *owned* that Mr. Faulkland had never promised to marry her—I know not what to think ; but there appears to me, upon the whole, something evasive and disingenuous in her conduct. My mother, who is all openness and integrity, saw it not in this light. But be it as it may, it is no longer of consequence to me, which was most to blame, the gentleman or the lady : Miss Burchell is certainly the injured Person ;
perhaps

perhaps I too may have wronged her in my surmises ; if I have, I beg her pardon ; the observations I have made on her behaviour are only *en passant*, and I do from my heart wish Mr. Faulkland would make her his wife. You may perceive, from what I have told you, how little this interview was likely to produce in Mr. Faulkland's favour, had it even been brought about sooner. My mother is now more than ever confirmed in her opinion, that the poor young creature has been deceived ; and she prays, that Mr. Faulkland may not be overtaken with a judgment, which she thinks nothing but his marrying the girl can avert.

November 10. ——— We have at length fixed upon a house to our liking, a handsome convenient one in St. James's-street. We are preparing to get it furnished as fast as we can, that we may go into it ; for if my brother should come to town, I know *our* being with my mother will be an objection to his lodging in her house : this I should be sorry for, as she told him he might make use of it while it remained in her hands.

November 15. ——— Thank my stars ! I have got over the fatigue of receiving and paying a second round of bridal visits, and I am really so tired of it, that, uninviting as the season is, I could wish myself in quiet at
Arnold-

Arnold-Abbey ; but I cannot think of leaving London while my mother continues in it, and she is now resolved to do so 'till Miss Burchell, or rather, on this occasion, Mrs. Jefferis, is brought to-bed. You can't imagine how sollicitous she is about her ; every time she sees her she seems more and more pleased with her. I am very glad it has happened so, for the poor young woman's sake ; my mother is as warm in her attachments as in her resentments. She visits her almost every second day ; for the poor thing it seems is ill at present, and can't leave her chamber. She tells me she is extremely melancholy, and seems much to dread the approaching hour. I greatly honour my good mother for her humanity towards her : in her terrifying situation she must want the tenderness of a well-bred as well as a sensible friend ; for it must be a melancholy thing, in such circumstances, to have no one about her but servants, and those strangers too.

She told my mother, that her altered looks, and frequent sicknesses, gave her aunt (who was privy to the cause of it all) a pretence for asking her uncle's permission for Miss to go to Bath, which she told him would do her more good than any thing. He consented, and supposed she was actually gone thither under the care of a lady, whom her aunt named, who was really going

ing there in order to settle for life, and to whose house she went for a day or two to give a colour to this story. Her aunt contrived that she should not take any servant with her; giving it for a reason, that as she might be as well attended by the lady's servants with whom she lodged, and be considered by her as one of the family, a maid would only be an unnecessary incumbrance. She added, that her uncle was so afflicted with the gout, that he never stirred abroad, and saw very little company, so that it was not likely he should ever be undeceived.

November 20. ——— We have just received a very odd piece of news, that I own has a little alarmed me. It is, that the widow of Mr. Arnold's brother is found to be with child. There was no mention of this at the time her husband died, nor indeed any cause to suspect it; but the strongest presumptions in the world to the contrary, as her husband and she lived a-part. It has not been even whispered, 'till since our arrival in town. The lady pretends that she was not conscious of it herself 'till within this fortnight; yet her husband has been dead four months. This I am told is very possible, though not very common. She has herself wrote a letter to Mr. Arnold, to inform him of it; at the same time declaring, that she and her late husband had
been

been reconciled a little before his death ; and that, had he recovered, she was to have lived with him again. All this is very strange. The elder Mr. Arnold killed himself with excessive drinking. His death approached him by slow degrees ; but as he could never be persuaded to think it near, he took not the least care either of his spiritual or temporal concerns. His brother was in the country when he was seized with his last illness, which he had precipitated by some extravagant excess. He was almost at the last extremity before he could be prevailed on to let a physician attend him, or suffer his brother to be sent for. In regard to the latter, he told those about him, that as he was his heir, of course he had made no will. He mentioned not his wife. The jointure which had been settled on her, he allowed her for a separate maintenance. They had for a long time pursued separate pleasures, and none of his friends knew that they had ever met, or so much as seen one another from the time they parted. My Mr. Arnold arrived in town just time enough to close his brother's eyes ; he was speechless when he came, and expired in less than an hour after he entered his chamber.

As his wife had been very obnoxious to the family, there was little notice taken of her

her by them, more than what common forms require. She seemed as indifferent about the death of her husband, as she had been towards him in his life-time; and did not then hint a word of this reconciliation between them, or of her having had an interview with him. I am told, she is a very weak, as well as a very loose woman; and Mr. Arnold thinks she has got into the hands of some designing person. However that matter may be, it is a serious affair; and he designs to take the opinion of an eminent lawyer upon it. My poor dear mother is frightened sadly. If this child should make its appearance in the world time enough to prove the possibility of its being the offspring of the late Mr. Arnold, she says, it must be considered by the law as his heir, notwithstanding the husband and wife lived apart. Mr. Arnold laughs, or affects to laugh at this; we shall, however, wait with patience 'till the lady is brought to-bed.

November 25. — Our house is intirely fitted up, and we shall remove into it this evening; my mother chuses to continue in her own, though Mr. Arnold presses her to accept of an apartment in ours; but we shall be near neighbours, and she does not like to change.

We

We have received the opinion of our lawyers, who tell us, that in case the child should be born within such a period of time, as to give colour to its claim, yet the lady must prove her assertion, in regard to the pretended meeting between her and her husband ; which it is imagined is not in her power to do ; and her indifferent character, together with several favourable circumstances which Mr. Arnold has on his side, makes them quite sanguine in their expectations of overturning her claim. We are, however, likely to be engaged in a disagreeable law-suit ; but as Mr. Arnold seems perfectly easy about the issue of it, I will make myself so too.

December 10. — I am more and more reconciled to my lot, my dear Cecilia, every day that I live. Mr. Arnold's assiduity and tenderness towards me deserve the gratefulest return my heart can make him ; and I am convinced it is not necessary to be passionately in love with the man we marry, to make us happy. Constancy, good sense, and a sweet temper, must form a basis for a durable felicity. The two latter I am sure Mr. Arnold possesses ; Oh ! may I never experience his want of the former ! I hope my own conduct will for ever ensure to me his love. That only can secure the tranquillity of my future Days.

De-

December 11. — My brother arrived in town last night ; and came this morning in company with my mother (and I am sure at her request) to make us a formal visit. My kind Mr. Arnold received him with tenderness ; Sir George was coldly polite. He owned, however, to my mother, upon her asking him his opinion of his brother-in-law, that he seemed to be a *good clever sort of a fellow*. I wish I could cultivate a friendship between them ; it will not be Mr. Arnold's fault if there is not ; but Sir George, you know, is not of a very pliant disposition.

He asked my mother, when they were alone, Whether she had yet seen Miss B. or Mrs. Jefferis (for he knew her by no other name) and what she had to say for herself? My mother told him, he had better not touch upon that string. I will be hanged, replied Sir George, if the artful young baggage has not imposed upon you. My mother, who is always angry at having her sagacity called in question, told Sir George he was rude, and she should give him no satisfaction on that head. My brother answered, as it was *now* of no consequence, what the wench affirmed or denied, he had no farther curiosity about her. My mother called him a bear, and so the enquiry ended.

December 20. — I congratulate you, my sister, my friend, my ever beloved Cecilia. Happy! happy may you be in your nuptials! but in the midst of my joy for your being so nobly and so worthily bestowed, self-love forces a sigh from me. I have lost the pleasing hope of seeing you, at the time fixed for your return. The station your husband holds at the court of Vienna, will, I fear, long detain my beloved in a foreign land. But you are not amongst strangers; a husband, a brother, and tender parent, must make every part of the globe equally your home. I will therefore seek for my contentment in your's, and rest satisfied with believing that you will always continue to love me.

January 10, 1703-4. — I begin to find my thoughts so much dissipated, that I am angry with myself; Mr. Arnold's excessive indulgence will spoil me; he is always contriving new scenes of pleasure, and hurries me from one to the other. I do not wish to be perpetually fluttering about. The calm domestic life you know was always my choice; but I will not oppose my kind Mr. Arnold in his fond desire of pleasing me: besides, I find that by his constantly gallanting me to public places, he begins himself to acquire a sort of relish for them, which he did not use to have; at least his prudence
made

made him so to conform to the necessity of his circumstances, while his fortune was small, that he never indulged himself in any of the fashionable expensive amusements; nor does he now in any, but such as I partake of with him. I find he is by nature open and liberal to excess. I must take care, without his being conscious of it, to be a gentle check upon his bounteous spirit; I mean only so far as it regards myself: indeed this is the most material point, for in every other instance his generosity is regulated by prudence. I am every hour more obliged to him, and should hate myself if I did not find that he had an entire possession of my love.

Sir George hardly ever comes near us but by formal invitation, and then his behaviour to Mr. Arnold is so very civil, and so very distant, that it mortifies me exceedingly. Mr. Arnold cannot but perceive it; but either his tenderness for me makes him take no notice of it, or else, not being well enough acquainted with my brother to know his disposition, he may impute his coldness to his natural temper.

My mother says, he never names Mr. Faulkland or Miss Burchell to her. I wish Sir George could entirely forget that unhappy affair.

February

February 1. — There is a story propagated by the widow Arnold, about the meeting between her and her husband; the circumstances of which are as follows:

She says, she had dined one day in the city, and was returning home to her lodgings in York-buildings in a hackney-coach; that the driver, by his carelessness in coming along the Strand, had one of his fore-wheels taken off by a waggon, which accident obliged her to alight: the footboy, who was behind the coach, had by the jolt been thrown off, and received a hurt, which made it necessary to have him carried into a shop for assistance. That the lady herself, being no otherwise injured than by a little fright, found that she was so near home, that she did not think it worth while to wait for another carriage, but pursued her way on foot. It was a fine dry evening, about nine o'clock; and though there was no light but what the lamps afforded, yet as the streets were full of people, she had no apprehensions of danger.

In this situation she was accosted by two gentlemen, who, seeing a lady well dressed and alone; insisted on seeing her safe to her lodgings. However disagreeable such an encounter was, she said she did not give herself much concern about it, as she was so near home, and expected to shake off her new acquaint-

acquaintance at the door of the house where he lodged ; and accordingly, when she got there, she told them she was at home, and wished them a good night ; but the importunents were not so easily to be put off. The door having been opened by the maid of the house, they both rushed in ; her landlady, a single woman, happened to be abroad, and there was no man in the house.

Mrs. Arnold thought she had no way left, but to run up to her dining-room, and lock herself in ; but in this she was prevented, as the gentlemen, whom the servant of the house vainly endeavoured to oppose, got up stairs almost as soon as she did. Her own maid, on hearing the rap at the door, had lighted candles in the dining-room ; the two sparks entered with her ; but how was she surprized to find that one of them was her husband. Her fright, she said, had prevented her from discovering this sooner, as she had not looked in either of their faces, though there was a light in the hall ; and Mr. Arnold's being half drunk, she supposed, was the reason of his not perceiving sooner who she was.

The astonishment that they both were in, and the exclamation that each made in their turn, soon informed the companion of Mr. Arnold who the lady was. He congratulated them both on this fortunate mistake,
and

and saying, since chance had been so propitious to Mr. Arnold as to throw him into the arms of so charming a woman, he hoped his discovering her to be his wife, would not render her the less agreeable to him; but that this unexpected meeting might be a means of re-uniting them in their former amity.

Mr. Arnold, she says, in the presence of this gentleman, advanced with open arms to embrace her, which she not declining, his friend having again felicitated them on their reconciliation, took his leave, and Mr. Arnold remained with his lady.

That at parting, which was not 'till late, (as she would not, on account of her reputation, permit him to pass the night at her lodgings) he promised to bring her home to his house in a day or two; but unfortunately for her he was taken ill in the interim, which she did not know of, 'till she had an account that Mr. Arnold had lost his senses. The reason she assigned for not enquiring after him sooner was, that her pride would not suffer her to make any advances to a man, who had been so injurious as to part with her; and she thought it his duty to recall her, without her taking any step towards it.

This

This story seems plausible ; yet none of our friends believe a word of it, and imagine somebody has contrived it for her. The gentleman, who was the companion of Mr. Arnold that night, she says, can at a proper time be produced as a witness, as also her own maid, who can testify the truth of this story. In the mean time this maid is kept out of the way, and nobody can guess at the gentleman, for his name is kept a profound secret.

I am delighted at the sweetness of Mr. Arnold's temper : vexatious as this affair is likely to be, even at the best, he does not suffer it to interrupt our pleasures or his own good humour. On the contrary, he is the more studious of promoting every thing, which he thinks will entertain me.

February 28.—At length the poor Miss Burchell is happily rid of her burthen ; a pretty little boy, my mother says it is: it was, immediately after its birth, at which my mother was present, privately baptized by the name of Orlando, and sent away with its nurse, a careful body, who had been before provided for it. It passes for the son of a captain Jefferis, abroad with the army. Miss Burchell would never suffer the nurse to see her ; for as she intends to reassume her own name, as soon as she shall be in a
con-

condition to leave her present retirement, she would chuse not to be known by the woman, in case of her going to see her child. Every thing was managed with so much privacy, and Miss Burchell has lived so perfectly recluse, nobody ever visiting her but my mother, that in all probability this affair will always remain an entire secret.

My mother says, that as soon as Miss Burchell (to whom she considers herself as a kind of patroness) is tolerably recovered, she will go down to Sidney-castle; for she thinks herself in a strange land any where but there. And would you believe, it my dear, she has taken such a fancy to Miss Burchell, that she talks of inviting her down with her, if she can obtain her uncle's leave. The girl must certainly have some very amiable qualities, so to captivate my mother, or she has an immensity of art. I dare say the young lady will gladly accept of her invitation; it will undoubtedly be a most eligible situation for her. I do not know what Sir George may say to her carrying her humanity so far, as he hates the name of this poor girl; but no matter, it may be a means of preserving her character, which probably she might not long keep, if she returned to live with so vile a woman as I conclude her aunt to be; nor can she have any colour for
quitting

quitting her, whilst her uncle lives; for I find she is an orphan, and has no relation but him. She must however go home for a while, in order to get leave from him for this visit to Sidney-castle.

March 26, 1704.——I am told the widow Arnold computes the time of her lying-in about the latter end of the next month; if it should so happen, she saves her distance, as her husband died in July, a little before we went to Grimston-hall. Mr. Arnold treats the affair very lightly, and is only concerned at seeing my mother so much affected by it. For my part, I form my behaviour upon Mr. Arnold's conduct; and as long as he appears easy, I shall certainly be so too.

My brother throws out some unkind reflections: he says, he wonders the old Sybil at Grimston-hall did not foresee this; and congratulates me on my good fortune, in having my jointure settled on that part of the estate which is not disputed. I really think he shews a sort of ill-natured triumph even in his condolences; for he generally concludes them with thanking his stars that *he* had no hand in the match. I trust in God we shall none of us have any cause to repent it. I am sure I never shall; for if Mr. Arnold were reduced to the lowest ebb of fortune, I

should find my consolation in his kindness and affection.

March 27.——My mother is preparing to leave town. Miss Burchell is quite recovered, and proposes going down to the country to obtain her uncle's consent for the intended visit. She says, she can easily tell him she made an acquaintance with lady Bidulph in her late excursion to Bath, from whom she received an invitation, and she is sure he will not refuse to let her accept it.

Sir George laughs exceedingly at this plan. He says his mother ought not to be surprized at Faulkland's falling into the girl's snares, since she herself has done the same; but he supposes my mother thinks she is doing a very meritorious action, in affording an asylum to this injured innocence. I give you my brother's words, for I assure you, as to myself, I approve of my mother's kindness to her, and think it may be a means of preserving the girl from future mischief.

April 2.——Miss Burchell is gone into the country, and this morning, for the first time, severed me from the best of mother's. I cannot recover my spirits; I have wept all day. Mr. Arnold, ever good and obliging, would needs accompany her some miles on her journey; you may be sure I was not left behind. Sir George was so polite as to say,
He

He would escorte her down to Sidney-castle. I was surprized at it ; for he does not often do obliging things. My mother gladly accepted of his company, and said, she would make him her prisoner, when she had him there ; for she should be quite melancholy without me for a time. Now though I should be very unwilling not to allow the merit of a good-natured action to Sir George, yet do I attribute this in some measure to its answering a purpose of convenience to himself. You know, before his illness sent him to the Spa, he always spent his summers with us at the Castle, though he has another very convenient house on his estate. When he was in London, he never had any thing but lodgings, for which I have often been angry with him. My mother, since his return, made him a compliment of her house ; but as the time she took it for is now expired, and it is let to another family, he could no longer continue in it. Mr. Arnold, in the most affectionate manner, pressed him to accept of an apartment with us, which he declined. Now as he could not, without shewing us an apparent slight, continue in town in other lodgings, I believe he, for this reason, preferred going down with my mother. Be it as it may, I am very glad that she will have his company ; for I make no doubt

of his staying with her some time, unless Miss Burchell should frighten him away.

April 5.—I have been so cast down since my mother's departure, that Mr. Arnold's obliging tender assiduity to please and entertain me seems redoubled; but indeed I am wearied with a continual round of noisy pleasures, and long to get back to Arnold-abbey. I hope to be there in about three weeks, or a month at farthest. My mother has dispensed with our going down to her this summer. She thinks it might be attended with inconveniencies to me, and talks of coming to town again in a few months; but I shall insist on her not giving herself the fatigue of so long a journey, unless she comes to stay all the next winter with us.

April 20.—My mother writes me word that Miss Burchell has obtained leave of her uncle, and is come to Sidney-castle: she says, she never saw a better behaved young creature. Sir George has taken so much offence at her coming, that he talks of going to his own house. My mother adds, 'He behaves, however, with manners, but I shall not press him to stay.'

May 6.—An important birth, my Cecilia! the widow Arnold has produced a young miss. I assure you the little damsel has been ushered into life with all the ceremony due to a young heiress; and her mother

ther introduces her as one, whom an unjust uncle debars of her right. Now you must know, that upon an exact calculation, this little girl has made her appearance just twelve days later than she ought to have done, to prove her legitimacy, dating the possibility of her being Mr. Arnold's, from the very day whereon he took that illness of which he died, and which confined him for five days to his bed. In all that time his servants never left him for a minute; this has occasioned various speculations; our lawyers say, that it is enough to destroy her pretensions; but some physicians, who have been consulted on the occasion, are of a contrary opinion; and declare they have known instances of children being born, even so long after the stated time allotted by nature for their coming into life.

It is a very unlucky affair, and has involved us in a law-suit. Who the person is, that secretly abets the widow, we cannot find out; but it is certain she has somebody; every one believes this is an infamous and unjust claim; and the woman's folly almost frees her from the suspicion of its being of her own contriving.

May 10.—You cannot imagine my Cecilia, how happy I think myself, after such a hurrying winter as I have had, to find myself once more restored to my favourite pleasures,

fures, the calm delights of solitude. Arnold-abbey seems a paradise to me now.

Lady Grimston shewed me a specimen of her humour this morning, in talking of the widow Arnold. She said she was an *barlot*, that having already disgraced the family, now wanted to beggar them; but that if Mr. Arnold did not make an example of her, she would never own him for a kinsman.

My chearful old Dean says, he is now completely happy, having lived to see his daughter married (while we were in town) very much to his and her satisfaction. I am heartily glad of it, neither am I sorry (for her sake) that she has left the country.

May 11.—Mrs. Vere is come to spend a few weeks with me according to her promise. She is a truly amiable creature; her disposition is so gentle, her temper so mild, such a sweet humility in her whole deportment, that it astonishes me her mother can still persist in her unkindness to her. But the eldest daughter was always her darling, who, I understand, is pretty much of her mother's own cast; and makes a very termagant wife to a very turbulent husband. So that notwithstanding their title (for he is a baronet) and immense riches, they are a very miserable pair.

They

They were lately to pay lady Grimston a visit; but there happened such a freacas, that probably it may be the last she will ever receive from them. The husband it seems, tho' very rough and surly in his nature, is, notwithstanding, a well-meaning man, and not void of humanity; which had induced him to give a small portion to a young girl, a distant relation of his own, who had been left an orphan. She was beloved by the son of a substantial farmer, a tenant of the baronet's, and had an equal affection for him; but the young man depending entirely on his father for his future prospects, durst not take a wife without something to begin the world with; for his father had just put him into the management of one of his farms. The young lady and her mother (who was a widow, and is but lately dead) had boarded for some years at this honest farmer's house, and in that time a mutual love had been contracted between the young people. The old man himself liked the girl so well for a daughter-in-law, that his only objection was her want of fortune; but this was such an obstacle as was not to be surmounted by a man, who, being accustomed to earn money by indefatigable industry, put the utmost value upon it. His regard to his son's happiness, however, made him resolve to try an experiment in his favour, and accordingly

he plucked up courage, and went to his landlord. He told him, in his own blunt way, that he came to speak to him in behalf of a poor young gentlewoman that was his (Sir William's) relation. I have a son that loves her, said he, and she loves him, but I cannot afford to let the boy marry a wife that has nothing; and you know she has no portion. I would not desire much with her, for she is a good girl, and very housewifely; but if you will be so kind to give her something to set them a going a little, I shall be content; if not you will be the cause of my son's losing a wife, for he swears he will never marry any other woman, and she, poor thing, may pine away for love. I do not desire this match out of the ambition of having my boy related to you, but because I think the girl is an honest girl, and may make him happy.

The rough honesty of the farmer pleased his landlord so well, that he gave the young woman five hundred pounds to set them a going, as the old yeoman termed it. Tho' this sum was but a trifle to a man of his fortune, and the giving it was a praise-worthy action, yet did it exceedingly displease his lady, especially as he had not thought proper to consult her on the occasion. She was not contented with venting her indignation on her husband at home, but she renewed the quarrel, by
complaining

complaining to lady Grimston, that her opinion and advice were not only despised, but that Sir William was lavishing away the fortune *she* had brought him, upon a *tribe* of poor relations of his own. Lady Grimston immediately took fire; she could not bear the thoughts of having her daughter's authority of less weight in his family, than her own had been, and she attacked her son-in-law with acrimony on the subject. His answer to her was short. Look ye, lady Grimston, you made a very obstreperous wife to a very peaceable husband; your daughter, I find, is mightily disposed to follow your example; but as I am not quite so tame as my father-in-law was, I will suffer her to see as little of it as may be. With this he turned from her, and ordering his coach and six to be got ready immediately, with very little ceremony he forced his wife into it, and carried her home directly, leaving lady Grimston foaming with rage. The altercation had been carried on with so little caution, that the servants heard it, and the story is the jest of the neighbourhood.

I confess I am not sorry for this breach; it may be the better for poor Mrs. Vere; for tho' her mother's jointure reverts to a male relation, on whom the estate was settled, yet as lady Grimston has a large personal fortune,

it is in her power to make her daughter full amends for the injury she did her.

May 20. ——— Mr. Arnold is improving his gardens, and taking in a great deal more ground to enlarge them. I do not express the least dissatisfaction at this, though I own I could wish he would not engage in new expences on an estate which is now in litigation; but our lawyers are so sanguine, that they encourage him to proceed.

[The following is writ in the hand of the lady, who gave the editor these papers:]

*“ Here follows an interval of four months;
“ in which time, though the journal was
“ regularly continued, nothing material to
“ her story occurred, but the birth of a
“ daughter, after which she proceeds.”]*

September 25. ——— How delightful are the sensations, my dear Cecilia, that I feel hourly springing in my heart! Surely the tenderness of a mother can never be sufficiently repaid; and I now more than ever rejoice in having, by an obedience, which perhaps I once thought had some little merit in it, contributed so much to the repose of a parent, to whom I have such numberless obligations. I never see my dear little girl, but I think such were the tender sentiments, the sweet anxieties, that my honoured and beloved mother felt when her Sidney was such a brat as this. Then I say, surely I have a right to all the duty, all the filial love that this creature

ture can shew me, in return for my fondness. As for Mr. Arnold, he idolizes it ; you never saw so good a nurse as he makes. Lady Grimston declares, we are both in a fair way of ruining the child, and advises us to send it out of the house, that we may not grow too fond of it : but we shall hardly take her counsel.

September 28.——I informed you before that Miss Burchell had been summoned home by her uncle, who was then very ill. She has lately written an account to my mother of his death ; and that as she has now her fortune in her own hands, she intends immediately to quit her aunt, and look out for some genteel and reputable family in London (where it seems she chuses to reside) to lodge with.

My mother, in her letter to me, expresses great satisfaction at her resolution to leave her aunt, but is not without her fears, that so pretty a young woman, left to her own guidance, may be liable to danger ; though she thinks both her natural disposition, and her good sense, sufficient to guard her against actual evil.

Our lawyer writes us word, that he has had an offer of a composition, proposed by the widow Arnold's people : he says, though the sum they mention is a very round one, yet it plainly indicates the weakness of their hopes ; and concludes with telling Mr. Arnold,

nold, that if six-pence would buy them off, he should not, with his consent, give it to them; as it would tacitly admit the legality of their claim, and might be productive of troublesome consequences hereafter; and therefore he would by all means have the issue fairly tried. Mr. Arnold laughs heartily at the proposal, but says he is very much obliged to the lady for condescending to give up more than half, when her daughter has a right to the whole; without whose consent he supposes it is not in the mother's power to make terms.

I wish we were rid of this troublesome affair, as it must hurry us to town sooner than we intended, and the country is still delightful.

London, October 1.—Again we have quitted our sweet retirement for the noise and bustle of London; but this law business, it seems, must be closely pursued, though our antagonist's motions seem a little dilatory. We cannot find out the secret spring that sets the machine a-going; the wheels however do not seem to move with such alacrity as they did; though the widow still talks big, and says, we shall repent of having rejected her offer.

October 3.—My brother is arrived in town, but took care to settle himself in handsome commodious lodgings before he paid us a visit, for fear, I suppose, that we
should

should again press him to accept of apartments in our house. I see he is determined to keep up nothing more than an intercourse barely civil. Mr. Arnold cannot but be disgusted with his behaviour, but he is too delicate to take notice of it to me.

October 7.—I am disappointed in my hopes of seeing my dear mother in town this winter. Her apartment was ready for her, and I delighted myself with the thoughts of seeing her in possession of it, at least for a few months; but she writes me word that her old rheumatick complaint is returned on her with such violence, that she cannot think of undertaking the journey. Sadly am I grieved at this news, and shall long to have the winter over, that Mr. Arnold and I may fly to Sidney-castle; he has promised me this satisfaction early in the summer.

My mother informs me that Miss Burchell constantly corresponds with her: she tells her that her aunt is come to town to solicit for her pension, but that she never sees her; and as she means to drop all correspondence with her, she does not intend even to let her know where she lodges. I commend Miss Burchell highly for this, as the acquaintance of such a woman may be hurtful to her reputation.

[Here ensues another interval of nine months, in which nothing particular is related,

lated, but that Mrs. Arnold became mother to a second child. This last circumstance, with a few others preceding and succeeding that event, are related in the Journal by her maid Patty; after which Mrs. Arnold herself proceeds.]

July 1, 1705.—Again, my dear Cecilia, I am able to reassume my pen. I have read what Patty has writ, and find she is admirable at the anecdotes of a nursery. Am I not rich, think you? Two daughters, and both perfect beauties, and great wits you may be sure!

The new-born damsel was baptized this day by the dear-loved name of Cecilia. I am angry with Mr. Arnold, he takes so little notice of this young stranger; his affections are all engaged by Dolly: indeed, I am almost jealous of her; for he spends most of the time he is at home in the nursery.

Our antagonist is grown alert again, and has renewed her efforts, which we thought began to flag a little, with fresh vigour. Whence she derives those revived hopes is still a mystery; but she now says, she would not accept of a composition if it were offered. My poor Mr. Arnold begins to fret a little, it now and then makes him thoughtful; not that he says he has the least doubt about his success, but he has been much harrassed with the necessary attendance

tendance that the cause requires, and downright tired with dangleing after lawyers; besides, they say the cause cannot come to an hearing in the ensuing term, though they before made us hope, that it would be at an end long before this time.

July 3.—I am mortified exceedingly, my dear Cecilia: I find I am not likely to see my mother this summer. I thought I could not have lived so long from her sight. Indeed it was purely in the hope of making her this visit, that I prevented her coming to town in the spring, which she purposed doing, though far from being well enough to undertake the journey. I own I have been impatient under my confinement, as that, and my previous circumstances, detained us so long in town, and I this day asked Mr. Arnold when we should set out for Sidney-castle. He answered me, that he feared it would not be in his power this season to pay the intended visit to my mother: he says, he has not been near his estate in Kent these five years, except for a day or two at a time, and that he thinks it necessary to see what condition it is in. I believe I have told you that there is a pretty house on it. The place is called South-park, and is that which my mother chose for my settlement. Mr. Arnold, who always preferred Arnold-abbey to it, hardly ever visited this place; and as he never resided there,

there, and only lay at an inn when he went down, the house is unfurnished, excepting a room or two, which a man who receives his rent has just made habitable for his own convenience.

But that I have laid it down as a rule never to oppose so good, so indulgent a husband as Mr. Arnold is, in any instance, wherein I do not think a superior duty requires me to do so, I should certainly shew some disapprobation of what he now purposes doing. It will be attended with so much trouble, so much expence too: he has ordered the house at South-park to be completely furnished, and says, he hopes I shall like it so well as to be induced to pass the remainder of the summer there. Most sure it is, every place will be delightful to me where I can enjoy his company, and have my dear little babes with me; but methinks two country houses are an unnecessary charge, and more than suits our fortune. I pray God this tender husband may not have a strong and prudent reason for this conduct, which out of kindness he conceals; perhaps he thinks this little spot at South-park may some time hence be the whole of our dependence, and he has a mind to be beforehand with ill fortune, in rendering that retreat agreeable to me, and rather an object of choice than of necessity. If this be his motive, How much am I obliged to him?

He

He has not hinted any thing like it; nor would I dash the pleasure he seems to promise himself there, by insinuating the least suspicion of what his reasons are for going to it. If we lose Arnold-abbey, and the whole estate belonging to it, I shall only regret it for his sake.

July 8. ——— We are to set out to-morrow, my Cecilia, for our place in Kent. I have made the best apology that I could to my mother, and Mr. Arnold too has writ to her; but I know she will be extremely disappointed at not seeing us.

July 12. ——— We are safely arrived at South-park, Mr. Arnold in high spirits, and my two young travellers bore the fatigue extremely well.

I am not surprized that Mr. Arnold liked the old family seat better than this. I cannot say I am much charmed with it, but I will not let him see that. I affect to admire, and seem pleased with every thing that affords me the least opportunity of commendation. The house is a very neat one; it has not been many years built, and is in perfectly good repair. It is genteelly, though plainly furnished, and we have a tolerable garden; but as the whole domain is let, we are obliged to take a few fields from one of our tenants, to supply our immediate want. We are in a very genteel
and

and populous neighbourhood, and within a mile of a good market town.

July 20.——I have regretted nothing so much in my absence from Arnold-abbey, as the being cut off from the hope of seeing my amiable Mrs. Vere. We can have but *one friend* to share our heart, to whom we have no reserve, and whose loss is irreparable; but I perceive the absence of a pleasing acquaintance, whose society is no farther necessary to us, than as it contributes to enliven solitude, and gets a preference to others merely by comparison, is a loss easily supplied; this I find by experience. There are Mrs. Veres every where; but, alas! there is but *one Cecilia*!

I was visited to-day by two ladies that I am charmed with, though it is the first time I have seen either of them. The one is lady V. of whom you have formerly heard. Her Lord and she came together; their seat is within a mile of us, and Mr. Arnold had a slight acquaintance with lord V. before. My lady is about forty, and has that kind of countenance that at once invites your confidence; I never saw integrity, benevolence, and good sense, more strongly pictured in a face; her address is so plain, so perfectly free from affectation, or any of the little supercilious forms of ceremony, that a person ignorant of what politeness consists in, would imagine she wanted breeding;

ing; yet she received her education in a court; but she seems to let good sense and good nature preside over all her words and actions rather than form. She told me she had deferred her visit to me, longer perhaps than the laws of decorum would admit of, as we were such near neighbours; but, said she, I was determined not to be overlooked in the crowd of visitors that have been thronging to you every day, since you came down. The character I have heard of you, makes me wish for an intimacy with you, and you are not to look upon this as a visit of ceremony, but as an advance towards that friendship I wish to cultivate.

She spoke this with so frank an air, that flattering as the compliment appeared, I could not help believing her sincere; and thought myself, that my appearance did not diminish that good opinion which she said she had conceived of me from report.

Lord V— is many years older than his lady; a robust man, as plain in his way as my lady is in her's; though *his* way and *her's* are very different; for he is frank even to bluntness, but the best humoured man living.

The other lady whom I mentioned is a widow; her name is Gerrarde, and she lives upon a little estate she has in this neighbourhood. I think I never beheld so fine a creature;

creature ; she is about six and twenty ; her stature, which is much above the common size, is rendered perfectly graceful and majestic by one of the finest shapes in the world ; if her grace is not altogether so regularly beautiful as her person, it is, however, handsome enough to render any woman charming who had nothing else to boast of. Whether her understanding be of a piece with the rest, I have not yet been able to discover. Her visit to me was but short, for she had not sat with me an hour when lady V— came in, and she then took her leave ; but by what I could observe in that little time, she seems to have as much vivacity and agreeable humour, as I ever met with in any one. She pressed me to dine with her at her cottage, as she calls it, to-morrow, and I like her too well to refuse the invitation.

These two charming women, I think, I shall single out for my chief intimates, from the crowd which have been to compliment me, on my coming into this country.

Mr. Arnold is mightily pleased with them both ; but he gives the preference to lady V—, whom, tho' he had a slight acquaintance with her lord, he never saw before. But he is almost as great a stranger in this place as I am : he is highly delighted at my having met with people who are likely to render it agreeable to me.

July

July 21. — We dined to day according to appointment with Mrs. Gerrarde. A cottage she called her house, nor does it appear much better at the outside, but within it is a fairy palace. Never was any thing so neat, so elegant, so perfectly well furnished, as the fitting up of all her rooms. Her bedchambers are furnished with fine chintzs, and her drawing-room with the prettiest Indian sattin I ever saw. Her little villa is called Ashby, and her husband, she told me, purchased it for her some time before his death, and left it to her; but she has since had a considerable addition to her fortune, by the death of a relation.

Our entertainment was splendid almost to profusion, though there was no company but Mr. Arnold and I. I told her, if she always gave such dinners, it would frighten me away from her: indeed it was the only circumstance in her whole conduct that did not please me, for I was charmed with the rest of her behaviour. They must surely be of a very churlish disposition, who are not pleased, where a manifest desire to oblige is conspicuous in every word and action. If Mrs. Gerrarde is not as highly polished as some women are, who, perhaps, have had a more enlarged education, she makes full amends for it by a perfect good humour, a sprightliness always entertaining, and a quickness of thought, that gives her conversation an air of something very *like* wit,

wit, and which I dare say passes for the thing itself with most people.

July 24. ——— I have returned lady V—'s visit, and am more delighted with her than before. Mr. Arnold went with me; but my lord not being at home, he went to ramble about the grounds, so that I had a long *tete a tete* with lady V—. She is an admirable woman, so fine an understanding, such delicacy of sentiment, and such an unaffected complaisance in her manner, that I do not wonder my lord perfectly adores her. There is a tenderness, a maternal kindness in her behaviour towards me, that fills me at once with love and reverence for her; and next to my Cecilia, I think I never met with any woman whom I could so highly esteem as lady V—. She is an admirable mistress of her needle, and every room in her house exhibits some production of a very fine genius, united with very great industry: for there are beds, chairs, and carpets, besides some very pretty rural prospects in pannels, executed with inimitable skill, and very excellent taste. She tells me, if I will give her leave to bring her work with her, she will live whole days with me.

I am rejoiced now that Mr. Arnold thought of coming to South-Park. How valuable is the acquaintance of such a woman as lady V—! and I might never have known

known her, but for a circumstance to which I was at first so averse. And then my agreeable lively Mrs. Gerrarde ! My acquaintance at Arnold-abbey begin to fade upon my memory : to say the truth, I think of none of them with pleasure, but Mrs. Vere, and my good humoured old Dean.

August 4.——Mrs. Gerrarde is a little faucy monopolist ; she grumbles if I do not see her every day, and is downright jealous of my intimacy with lady V—. They are acquainted, but I don't find there is a very close intercourse between them : Mrs. Gerrarde says, her ladyship is too good a housewife for her ; and as she is not very fond of needle-work herself, she cannot endure people that are always poring over a frame. I find indeed, that this sprightly rogue is fonder of cards than of work : she draws Mr. Arnold and me in very often for a pool at picquet : at her house I am obliged to submit ; but at my own, I often take up a book, when she and Mr. Arnold are engaged at their game, and make them decide the contest between them. Nay, I threaten that I will, some night or other, steal to bed and leave them ; for she is unconscionable at late hours ; and as she lives very near us, and keeps a chariot, she does not scruple to go home at any hour of the night. What a pity it is so amiable a woman should be thus fondly attached to so unprofitable an amusement !

amusement ! for I begin to see play is her foible ; though, to do her justice, she never engages but for very trifling sums, and that only in our own little domestic way. But this passion may grow upon her, and she may be led unawares into the losing more than her fortune can bear.

August 12.—I was never so disconcerted as I have been this day : you will be surprized when I tell you, it was by my good lady V—. She came to pass the day with me, Mr. Arnold being engaged abroad.

We were both sitting at work in the parlour : lady V— had continued silent for a good while ; at last looking at me with a most benign smile, for I had at the same instant cast my eyes at her ; I was just then thinking, my dear Mrs. Arnold, said she, that I once (though perhaps you did not know it) flattered myself with the hopes of being related to you. Her words threw me into confusion, though I did not know their meaning. It would have been both an honour and a happiness to me, madam, I replied, though I don't know by what means I was ever likely to possess it. She continued smiling, but seemed in suspense whether she should proceed. You will pardon my curiosity, my dear, said she, but give me leave to ask, whether Mr. Arnold was not once near losing the happiness he now enjoys ? I felt my face glow as she spoke. There was
once

once a treaty of marriage on foot, madam, between me and another gentleman. I am sorry I mentioned it, said my lady, observing my confusion; but as I was no stranger to the affair while it was transacting, and Mr. Faulkland is a kinsman of mine, I hope you will forgive my inquisitiveness; for I own I have a curiosity, which I believe no body but yourself can gratify; and if I did not think you the most candid, as well as the best tempered creature living, I durst not push my enquiry. My lord, you are to know, was in London, at the time Mr. Faulkland was first introduced to you; and as they are extremely fond of each other, Mr. Faulkland did not scruple to disclose his passion to him, nor the success it then appeared likely to be crowned with, giving him at the same time such a character of you, as I have since found you deserve.

When my lord returned to V—hall, which he was obliged to do very soon after Mr. Faulkland had made this discovery to him, he informed me of the alliance my cousin Faulkland was going to make; and we were pleasing ourselves with the thoughts of congratulating him on his happiness, when we received a letter from him that put an end to all our expectations; this letter contained but four distracted lines: he told my lord, in broken sentences, that he had lost all hopes of *Miss* Bidulph; that an act

of indiscretion had been construed into a capital crime ; and that being banished from the presence of the woman he adored, he was immediately about to bid adieu to England, perhaps for ever.

This was the substance of what he wrote to us : we have heard from him since a few times, but he never cleared up the matter to us, nor even so much as mentioned it. I have not been in London since ; my lord has ; but he never could get any light into the mystery ; he heard from some of our friends, who knew of the intended match, that it was broke off, no body knew why. There were, however, several idle surmises thrown out ; some laid the blame on Mr. Faulkland, and some on you ; but the truth I believe remains still a secret. Now, my dear, if my curiosity is improper, or if there was any particular motive to this disappointment of my kinsman's hopes, which you don't chuse to reveal, forgive my enquiry, and think no more of it ; but take up that book, and read to me while I work.

Though my lady gave me this kind opportunity of evading her question, I did not lay hold of it : I did not indeed chuse to reveal the whole of this affair, because I did not think myself at liberty to divulge Miss Burchell's secret, however I might discover my own. I told my lady in general terms, that though Mr. Faulkland might pretend

to a lady every way my superior, yet there was an objection to him of no small weight with us ; that my mother had been informed of a very recent piece of gallantry he had had with a person of some condition, and that it had disgusted her so much, she could not think of uniting me with a man whose passions were not a little more staid ; and that this was the sole reason of her dislike to a gentleman, who was in every other respect unexceptionable. I am glad it was no worse, said lady V—, smiling, I am sure Mr. Faulkland is not capable of a *base* action ; youthful follies he may have had, though I believe as few even of those to answer for as most men of his year. I make not the least doubt, however, that lady Bidulph was guided by prudence in what she did. She certainly could not be too cautious in the disposal of *such* a child as you ; and whatever Mr. Faulkland's disappointment may be, *you* I hope are happy. Lady V— looked at me as she pronounced these words, with an inquisitive, though tender regard. I was glad of an opportunity of enlarging on the merits of Mr. Arnold, and told her, I was as happy as my heart could wish, or the worthiest of men could make me. I am glad of it, said she, with a quickness in her voice ; but don't imagine, my dear Mrs. Arnold, (and she took me by the hand) that I introduced this conversation merely to gratify a curiosity,

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osity, which I fear you must condemn in your private thoughts, though you have been so good as to satisfy it: I had another reason, a much stronger one. What is it, dear madam? almost starting with apprehensions of I did not know what. Don't be alarmed, said she, smiling, it is only this; a great aunt of Mr. Faulkland's is lately dead, who has left him a considerable personal estate, and he is coming over to take possession of it; otherwise I don't know when we should have seen him in England. My lord had a letter very lately from him; he was then at Turin, where he had met with our eldest son, who is now on his travels: he told us he had letters and some tokens of love to deliver to us from him; and that he should immediately on his arrival in England come to V—hall, where he would pass a month with us. Now as we expect him daily, I had a mind to apprize you of his intended visit, that you might not be surprized, by perhaps unexpectedly meeting him at my house. I thanked her ladyship for her obliging caution, tho' I thought it had something in it that mortified me. I told her, that though I should not seek to renew my acquaintance with Mr. Faulkland, yet had I no reason to avoid him. Lady V—, who is extremely quick of apprehension, replied, without doubt, madam, you have not;

not ; but you might be surprized at seeing him notwithstanding.

She presently turned the discourse ; but made me happy the whole day, by that inexhaustible fund of good sense and improving knowledge, of which she is mistress.

Mr. Arnold came not home 'till very late ; he complains that he is got into a knot of acquaintance that like the bottle too well ; but I am sure his natural sobriety is such, that it will not be in the power of example to lead him into intemperance ; though I am vexed he has fallen into such acquaintance, because I know drinking is disagreeable to him : yet a country gentleman must sometimes give a little into it, to avoid the character of being singular.

August 22.—Surprized I was not, because I came prepared ; but I own I was abashed, at seeing Mr. Faulkland to-day. Mr. Arnold and I were invited to dine at lord V——'s, and his lordship, and his guest, came in from the fields where they had been walking, just as we were ready to sit down to table.

There happened to be a good deal more company ; Mr. Faulkland was not introduced ; so that there was no room for any thing constrained or improper of either side. I presently recovered the little embarrassment, that his first entrance into the room had occasioned. I am sure no body took

notice of it; for dinner being immediately served, there was a sort of bustle in hurrying out of the drawing-room. The crowd we had at table destroyed all conversation; and nothing particular was said during dinner. Lady V— soon withdrew, and all her female friends followed her. I observed she frequently glanced her penetrating eyes at Mr. Faulkland while we were at table, but I did not chuse to make any observations on him. We had not been long seated at our coffee, when four of the gentlemen slipped from their company and came to us: these were Mr. Arnold, Mr. Faulkland, and two others. My lord is pretty free at his bottle, and none of these gentlemen, I suppose, were fond of that entertainment. Lady V—— and I were sitting on a couch: I called to Mr. Arnold, and placed him between us: Mr. Faulkland approached me, and then, for the first time, with a respectful distance, enquired after my mother and Sir George, telling me he had missed of the latter, when he was in London, being told he was at Sidney-castle. After a few more indifferent questions, he took a dish of coffee, and retired with it to a window. Mr. Arnold asked me in a whisper, if I was acquainted with Mr. Faulkland; I could only answer that I was formerly very well acquainted with him. Nothing more passed between Mr. Faulkland and me the whole evening: he returned soon
to

to the company in the next room, and I saw no more of him.

I can, with the utmost sincerity, assure my Cecilia, that I now behold Mr. Faulkland with as much indifference as I do any other man of my acquaintance. Time, joined to my own efforts, must, without any other help, have entirely subdued an inclination which was always restrained by prudential motives, and rendered subservient to my duty; but I have, besides this, now acquired a shield that must render me invulnerable; I mean the perfect and tender affection I bear my husband: this has completely secured me against the most distant apprehensions of being alarmed from any other quarter; yet notwithstanding all this, I can't say that I am quite satisfied at this renewal of my acquaintance with Mr. Faulkland. I hope, and indeed it is reasonable to suppose, that I have now as little interest in *his* heart as he has in mine: it is but natural to believe that a gay young man like him, should not be so weak as to nourish a hopeless passion for more than two years, especially as he has never once seen the object of it in all that time; and must, without doubt, have had his attention engaged to others in all likelihood much preferable to her; so that I think I have reason to be as easy on his account as on my own. But still am I disquieted in my mind; I have a delicacy that takes alarm at

the veriest trifles, and has been a source of pain to me my whole life-time: it makes me unhappy to think that I am now under an almost unavoidable necessity of sometimes seeing and conversing with a man, who once had such convincing proofs, that he was not indifferent to me.

Mr. Arnold's ignorance of our former connections makes it still worse. At the time I was so averse to his knowing any thing of this affair, I flattered myself I should never see Mr. Faulkland more, or at least never be obliged to have any intercourse with him; but I now lament that I did not take my mother's advice, and disclose the whole affair at first. Oh! my Cecilia, when the smallest deviations from candor (which we suppose discretion,) are thus punished with remorse, what must they feel whose whole life is one continued act of dissimulation? If Mr. Arnold had been acquainted with my former engagements, my heart would be more at ease, and I should then converse with this man with all the disengaged freedom of a common friend. I wish Mr. Arnold's curiosity would excite him to ask me some questions relative to my acquaintance with Mr. Faulkland, that I might have an opportunity of telling him the secret. But the enquiry he made at lady V—'s was in a careless manner; he was satisfied with my reply, and spoke not of him since.

You

You will laugh perhaps when I tell you that I have not courage to mention it first: Mr. Faulkland is reckoned a very fine gentleman, and I think it would have such an air of vanity to tell my husband that I refused him: then it would bring on such a train of explanations, and poor Miss Burchell's history must come out; for a husband on such a subject might be disgusted with concealments of any kind; and I doubt whether even some circumstances in my particular share of this story might not displease him. In short, I am bewildered, and know not what to wish for; but must e'en let things take their course, and rest satisfied in the integrity of my own heart.

August 26.—Oh! my dear, I am mortified to the last degree, lest Mr. Arnold should, from some indiscreet tongue, have received a hint of my former engagement; he may think me disingenuous for never having mentioned it, especially since Mr. Faulkland has been in the neighbourhood: I think his nature is too open to entertain any suspicions essentially injurious to me; yet may this affair, circumstanced as it is, make an unfavourable impression on him. I wish I had been before-hand with any officious whisperer: he has got so many new acquaintance, and is so much abroad, that the story may have reached his ears. God forbid it should affect his mind with causeless unea-

finess! I would Mr. Faulkland were a thousand miles from V—hall. I think Mr. Arnold is altered since his arrival there—— Colder he appears to be——I hope I but *fancy* it——yet there *is* a change——his looks are less kind——his voice has lost that tenderness, that it used to have in speaking to me——yet this may only be his temper——a man cannot *always* be a lover——Oh! I sicken at the very thought of Mr. Arnold's entertaining a doubt of my true affection for him. I would not live in this suspense for millions. I would rather he should treat me roughly——if I discovered that to be his humour, though it would frighten me, yet should I patiently conform to it.

August 30.——That which was ever the terror of my thoughts is come upon me—Mr. Arnold—Ah! my dear Cecilia! Mr. Arnold is no longer the same! Coldness and indifference have at length succeeded to love, to complacency, and the fondest attention—What a change! but the *cause*, my dear, That remains a secret locked up in his own breast. I cannot believe that a whisper, an idle rumour should affect him thus. What if he *has* heard that Mr. Faulkland loved me once? That we were to have been married? Cannot he ask me the question? I long to set his heart at ease—yet cannot mention the affair first, after so long a silence; it would look

look like a consciousness. A consciousness of what? I have nothing to accuse myself of.

September 1.——I am no longer in doubt.——The cause, the fatal cause of Mr. Arnold's change is discovered. This miserable day has disclosed the secret to me; a black, a complicated scene of mischief.

Mr. Arnold rode out this morning. He told me he was to dine with a gentleman at some miles distance, and should not return till late in the evening.

He was but just gone, when a lady of my acquaintance called in upon me, to request I would go with her to a play, that was to be performed at night. You must know we have had a company of players in the neighbourhood for some time past, and it was to one of those poor people's benefits that she desired my company. I promised to attend her, tho' you know I don't much admire those sort of entertainments in the country, and seldom go to them.

The lady and her husband called upon me at the appointed hour, and I went with them in their coach. The place which the players had fitted up for their purpose, had formerly been a pretty large school-room, and could, with the addition of a gallery (which they had made) with ease contain above three hundred people. The play had been bespoke by some of the principal ladies in the neighbourhood, who had used all their interest for
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the performer, so that the house was as full as it could hold. The audience consisting chiefly of fashionable people, it was with difficulty that we reached the places which were kept for us in the pit, as they happened to be on the bench next the stage, and the door was at the other end of the house. The first object that I observed on my coming in, was Mr. Faulkland; he bowed to me at a distance, but made no attempts to approach me. The play was come to the latter end of the fourth act, and the curtain was let down to make some preparation on the stage, when we were alarmed with the cry of fire.

It happened that the carpenters, who had been employed in fitting up this extempore theatre, had left a heap of shavings in a little place behind the stage, which had been converted into a dressing-room; a little boy belonging to the company had found a candle in it, and having piled up the shavings, set them on fire, and left them burning: the flame communicated itself to some dry boards which lay in the room, and in a few minutes the whole was in a blaze. Some persons, who heard the crackling of wood, opened the door, when the flame burst out with such violence, and the scenes were presently on fire, and the curtain, which as I told you was dropt, soon caught it.

The consternation and terror of the poor people, whose *all* was destroying, is not to be

be described: the women shrieking, threw themselves off the stage into the pit, as the smoke and flames terrified them from attempting to get out any other way, though there was a door behind the stage.

The audience were in little less confusion than they; for as the house was composed chiefly of wood, every one expected it would soon be consumed to ashes.

The horror and distraction of my mind almost deprived me of the power of motion. My life was in imminent danger; for I was scorched with the fire before I could get at any distance from the stage, tho' the people were rushing out as fast as they could.

The lady who was with me was exceedingly frightened; but being under her husband's care, had a little more courage than I had. He caught her round the waist, and lifted her over the benches, which were very high, giving me what assistance he could with his other hand. But the terror and hurry I was in occasioned my foot to slip, and I fell between two of the benches, and sprained my ankle.

Some people pushing to get out, rushed between me and my company; the excessive pain I felt, joined to my fright, made me faint away; in this condition Mr. Faulkland found me, and carried me out in his arms; for my companion was too anxious for her
own

own safety, to suffer her husband to stay to give me any assistance, so that he had only time to beg of the men about him not to let me perish.

I soon recovered, upon being carried into the open air, and found myself seated on some planks, at a little distance from the booth, Mr. Faulkland supporting me, and two or three other people about me, whom he had called to my assistance.

Indebted to him as I was for saving my life, my spirits were at that time too much agitated to thank him as I ought.

He told me he had stepped behind the scenes to speak to somebody, and was there when the stage took fire; that he then ran to give what assistance he could to the ladies that were in the house (observe he distinguished not *me* in particular), and had just come in when he saw me meet with the accident, which had occasioned my fainting away; and when the gentleman who was with me, was calling for help, but at the same time getting out as fast as he could.

I now began to recollect myself; I was uneasy at Mr. Faulkland's presence; I wished him away. I beseeched him to return once more to the booth, to see if every one had got out safe, for I told him I had seen several of my female acquaintance there, for whom I was alarmed. With the assistance of the people who were about me, I said I could

could make a shift to get to the nearest house, which was not above a hundred yards off, from whence I should send home for my chariot, which I had ordered to come to me after the play. He begged I would give him leave to see me safe to that house, but I would not permit him; and he left me in the care of two women and a man, who had come to be spectators of the fire.

With the help of these people, I contrived to hobble (for my ankle pained me exceedingly) to the place I mentioned, which happened to be a public house. All the rooms below were full, and the woman of the house very obligingly helped me up stairs to her own chamber. I called for a glass of water, which was immediately brought me, and I desired the woman to send some one to my house, which was at about a mile's distance, to order my chariot to come to me immediately.

While the woman went to execute my instructions, I had thrown myself into a chair that stood close to the wainscot. I heard a bell ring, and presently a waiter entered, and asked if I wanted any thing; I told him, no. He ran hastily out of the room, and entering the next to that where I was sitting, I heard a voice, which I knew to be Mr. Arnold's, ask, Were the servants found? The man replying that they were not, Then, said Mr. Arnold, tell your mistress she will oblige

blige me if she will let me have her chaise to carry this lady home. The waiter presently withdrew, and without reflecting on the particularity of Mr. Arnold's being there with a lady, about whom I formed no conjectures, I was about to rise off my chair to go in to him; but being almost disabled from walking, I was obliged to creep along, holding by the wainscot; when a tender exclamation of Mr. Arnold's stopped me. My dearest creature, said he to his companion, you have not yet recovered your fright. A female voice answered him with some fond expressions, which I could not hear distinctly enough to discover whose it was; but I was soon put out of doubt, when the lady added, in a louder tone, Do you know that your wife was at the play to-night? Mr. Arnold answered, No; I hope she did not see me. Mrs. Gerrarde, for I perceived it was she who spoke, replied, I hope not, because perhaps she might expect you home after the play. Though Mr. Arnold, in his first emotion of surprize at hearing that I was at the play, was only anxious lest I should have observed him, yet he was not so lost to humanity as to be indifferent whether I escaped the flames or not: I am surprized I did not see her, said he; I wish she may have got out of the house safe. You are very solicitous about her, replied Mrs. Gerrarde, peevishly; there was one there per-

perhaps as anxious for her preservation as you are — The conversation I found here was likely to become extremely critical for me ; but I was prevented from hearing any more, by the woman of the house, who just then entered the room to ask me how I did, and to know if I wanted any thing.

I had heard enough to convince me that my presence would be very unacceptable both to Mr. Arnold and his companion, and I resolved not to interrupt them ; nor, if possible, ever let Mr. Arnold know that I had made a discovery so fatal to my own peace, and so disadvantageous to him and his friend.

The messenger who had been dispatched for my chariot met it by the way, and was now returned with it ; I was told that it was at the door ; and it was with difficulty I got down stairs, leaning on the woman of the house.

I found Mr. Faulkland at the door ; he saw that I wished to disengage myself from him after he had carried me out of the booth ; and though probably he did not take the trouble to execute the sham commission I gave him, which was indeed with no other view than to get him away, yet I believe he had too much respect to intrude on me ; and came then with no other design than to enquire if my chariot had come for me,
and

and how I was after the terrible condition he had left me in, sitting at night in the open air, with nobody but two or three ordinary people about me, and those strangers. This was a piece of civility which humanity, had politeness been out of the question, would have obliged him to. He told me the fire was extinguished, and happily nobody had received any hurt; and that he had only called at that house to know if I were safe, and recovered from the fright and pain he had left me in. I thanked him, and was just stepping, assisted by Mr. Faulkland, into the chariot, when Mr. Arnold appeared at the door: he was alone; and I concluded, that having heard the chariot rattle up the court-yard, he supposed it was the carriage he had ordered for Mrs. Gerrarde, and came down to see if it was ready to receive her.

The light which the servant, who attended me out, held in his hand, immediately discovered Mr. Arnold and me to each other. I could easily distinguish surprize mixed with displeasure in his countenance. He asked me abruptly, How I came to that place? Which I told him, in few words. The cold civility of a grave bow passed between him and Mr. Faulkland, who leaving me in my husband's hands, wished me a good night, and got into my lord V—'s coach, which waited for him.

Though

Though I knew, from the discourse I had overheard, that Mr. Arnold did not mean to go home with me, yet as I was now seated in the chariot, I could not avoid asking him. He told me, he was engaged to sup with company at that house, and that probably he should not be at home till late. I knew this beforehand, and, without troubling him with any farther questions, drove home.

I have thrown together the strange occurrences of this evening, as well as the tumult of my spirits would give me leave : I shall now lay down my pen, to consider of them a little more calmly. My heart sinks in me — Oh ! that I had remained in ignorance ! —

Is it possible, my Cecilia, that Mr. Arnold, so good a man, one who married me too for love, and who for these two years has been the tenderest, the kindest husband, and to whom I never gave the most distant shadow of offence, should at last be led into——I cannot name it——dare not think of it——yet a hundred circumstances recur to my memory, which now convince me I am unhappy ! If I had not been blind, I might have seen it sooner. I recollect some passages, which satisfy me that Mr. Arnold's acquaintance with Mrs. Gerrarde did not commence at South-park. I remember lady V—— once asked me, had she and I been acquainted in London ? I said, No.
My

My lord laughed, and in his blunt way said, I will swear your husband was, for I have seen him hand her out from the play more than once. I never asked Mr. Arnold about this; it made no impression on me at the time it was spoke, and went quick out of my thoughts.

'Tis one o'clock: I hear Mr. Arnold ring at the outer gate; I tremble all over, and feel as if I feared to see him. Yet why should I fear? I have not injured *him*.

September 2. — Mr. Arnold staid long enough in his dressing-room after he came in last night, to give me time to go to-bed before he came up stairs. Not a word passed between us: I slept not the whole night: whether he did or not I cannot tell. He asked me this morning, when he rose, how I did: I told him in great pain. My ankle was prodigiously swelled, and turned quite black, for I had neglected it last night. He said, you had better let a surgeon see it, and went carelessly out of the room. How new is unkindness to me, my friend! you know I have not been used to it. Mr. Arnold adds cruelty too — but let it be so; far be reproaches or complaints from my lips; to you only, my second self, shall I utter them; to you I am bound by solemn promise, and reciprocal confidence, to disclose the inmost secrets of my soul, and with you they are as safe as in my own breast. —

I am

I am once more composed, and determined on my behaviour. I have not a doubt remaining of Mr. Arnold's infidelity; but let me not aggravate my own griefs, nor to a vicious world justify my husband's conduct, by bringing any reproach on my own. The silent sufferings of the injured, must, to a mind not ungenerous, be a sharper rebuke than it is in the power of language to inflict.

But this is not all: I must endeavour, if possible, to screen Mr. Arnold from censure. I hope his own imprudence may not render these endeavours ineffectual. I am resolved not to drop my acquaintance with Mrs. Gerarde. While we continue upon a footing of seeming intimacy, the frequent visits, which I am sure Mr. Arnold makes at her house, will be less taken notice of.

How Sir George would triumph at the knowledge of Mr. Arnold's deviating from virtue! How my poor mother would be amazed and afflicted! But I will, as far as lies in my power, disappoint the malice of my stars; my mother shall have no cause to grieve, nor my brother to rejoice; the secret shall die with me in my own bosom, and I will wait patiently, 'till the hand of time applies a remedy to my grief.—Mrs. Gerarde sent a message to enquire how I did. Conscious woman! she would not come herself,

self, though she knew not I had discovered her.

— My dear good lady V—— hurried to see me the instant she had breakfasted : Mr. Faulkland had told her of my disaster, and her tenderness soothed and comforted me much. She sat by my bed-side two hours, and her discourse alleviated the pain both of my mind and body ; but now she has left me, I must again recur to the subject that wrings my heart. Mr. Arnold is enslaved to one of the most artful of her sex. I look upon his attachment to be the more dangerous, as I believe it is the first of the kind he ever had ; and no woman was ever more formed to please and to deceive, than she who now holds him in her chains. Into what hands am I fallen ! Mrs. Gerrarde must have heard my story, and by the hint I heard her drop, what cruel misrepresentations may she have made to Mr. Arnold ! Mr. Faulkland, she can have no enmity to ; but me she certainly hates, for she has injured me.

'Tis noon : I have not seen Mr. Arnold since morning ; he has been abroad ever since he rose ; Good God ! is this the life I am condemned to lead ?

A new scene of affliction is opened to me : surely my fate is drawing towards a crisis. Mr. Arnold has just left me. What a conversation have we had !

After

After entering my room, he walked about for some minutes without speaking ; at last stopping short, and fixing his eyes upon me, How long have you, said he, been acquainted with Mr. Faulkland ? I told him my acquaintance began with him some months before I was married. He was once your lover, I am informed. He was, and a treaty of marriage was concluded on between us. You would have been happier perhaps, madam, if it had taken place. I do not think so, Mr. Arnold, you have no reason to suppose I do. I had a very great objection to Mr. Faulkland, and obeyed my mother willingly, when she forbid me to see him. I ask not what that objection was, said he ; but I suppose, madam, you will without reluctance obey *me*, if I make the same request to you. Most chearfully ; you cannot make a request with which I should more readily comply. But let me beseech you, Mr. Arnold, to tell me, what part of my behaviour has given you cause to think such a prohibition necessary ? I do not say, answered Mr. Arnold, that I have any suspicion of your virtue ; but your acquiescence in this particular is necessary to *my* peace and your *own* honour. A lady's being *married* does not cut off the hopes of a gay man. You give me your promise that you will not see him any more. I *do*, said I ; I will give up lady V—, whose acquaintance I so much esteem :

esteem: I will go no more to the house while Mr. Faulkland continues there; and I know of no other family, where I visit, that he is acquainted with.

My pride would not suffer me to enquire where he had got his information: I already knew it too well; and fearing he would rather descend to an untruth than tell me his author, I declined any farther questions. He seemed satisfied with my promise, but quickly left me, as if the whole end of his visit to me was accomplished in having obtained it.

September 8.———⁹ What painful minutes am I obliged to sustain! Mrs. Gerrarde has been to see me, gay and assured as ever. She affected to condole with me on the accident that had happened to my foot, with such an overstrained concern, such a tender solicitude, that her insincerity disgusted me, if possible, more than the other part of her behaviour. She told me, she herself had been at the play, but very luckily had got out without receiving any injury. I said, I was surprized I had not seen her there. O, replied she, I was in a little snug corner, where nobody could see me; for having refused to go with some ladies that asked me, I did not chuse to be visible in the house, and so squeezed myself up into what they called their gallery, for I took nobody with me but my maid. Audacious woman!

———Is

——Is it not strange, my dear, that Mr. Arnold could be so weak as to humour her in the absurd frolick of going with her to such a place ; for so it must have been ; or perhaps she appointed him only to call for her at the play ; and he might have arrived but just in time to assist her in getting out. No matter which it was.

September 9.——I was born to sacrifice my own peace to that of other people ; my life is become miserable, but I have no remedy for it but patience.

Mr. Arnold spends whole days abroad ; at night we are separated on account of my indisposition ; so that we hardly ever converse together. What a dreadful prospect have I before me ! O ! Cecilia, may you never experience the bitterness of having your husband's heart alienated from you !

Lady V——, that best of creatures, is with me constantly ; she presses me to come to her house, as my ankle is now pretty well, yet I am obliged to excuse myself. I am distressed to the last degree at the conduct I shall be forced to observe towards her, yet dare not explain the motive. Causeless jealousy is always the subject of ridicule, and at all events Mr. Arnold must not be exposed to this.

September 12.——I am weary of inventing excuses for absenting myself from V——hall. My lady has done soliciting

me, yet continues her friendly and affectionate visits ; I fear she guesses my situation, though she has not as yet hinted at it ; but her forbearing to press me any more on the subject of going to her, and at the same time not requiring a reason for this breach of civility as well as friendship, convinces me, that she suspects the cause of my restraint. I am now perfectly recovered, yet do I still confine myself to my house, to avoid as much as possible giving umbrage to lady V——: but this restraint cannot last much longer ; Mrs. Gerrarde teazes me to come to her, and I have promised to make her my first visit.

September 27.——Said I not that my fate was near its crisis ? Where will this impending ruin end ? Take, my Cecilia, the occurrences of this frightful day.

Mr. Arnold rode out this morning, and told me he should not return 'till night. He asked me, with that indifference which now accompanies all his words, How I meant to dispose of myself for the day ? I told him I had no design of going abroad, and should spend my time in reading, or at my needle. This was my real intention ; but Mr. Arnold had but just left the house, when I received a message from Mrs. Gerrarde to know how I did, and to tell me she was not well, and much out of spirits, or she would come and pass the day with me ; but that

that she insisted on my dining with her. As I had told Mr. Arnold I did not mean to go out, I really had neither intention nor inclination to do so. But shall I confess my weakness to you? I suspected that he purposed spending the day (as he often did) with Mrs. Gerrarde, and the more so from the question he had asked me on his going abroad; he thought I might probably pay her a visit; and this intrusion was a circumstance he had a mind to be guarded against, by knowing beforehand my designs. I had not been to see Mrs. Gerrarde since my recovery, and it was natural to suppose I would return her visits. Possessed as I was with this opinion, her message gave me a secret satisfaction, as it served to convince me Mr. Arnold was not to be with her, for she generally detained me late when I went to her house. From what trivial circumstances will the afflicted draw consolation, or an additional weight of grief? So it was, I felt a sort of pleasure, in thinking, that for all that day at least Mr. Arnold would absent himself from my rival. — My rival! mean word, she is not worthy to be called so; from his mistress let it be. In short, I resolved to go, especially as she had sent me word she was not well, and I knew my husband would be pleased with my complaisance.

I went accordingly to her house, a little before her hour of dining, which is much

later than any body's else in this part of the world. I found her dressed out, and seemingly in perfect health. She looked surprized when she saw me; and I then supposed that she hoped to have received a denial from me, and was disappointed at my coming; though I wondered that the answer she received to her message had not prepared her. This thought rushed into my mind in an instant, and I was sure she expected Mr. Arnold. I told her if I had thought I should have found her so well, that her message should not have brought me to her; for that I had determined not to stir out that day, 'till her invitation prevailed on me to change my mind. Sure, my dear, said she, there must have been some mistake in delivering the message to you, it was for to-morrow I desired the pleasure of your company to dine with me; for to-day I am absolutely engaged. However, I am very glad you are come, for I shall not go out 'till seven o'clock. I was vexed and mortified; either your servant or mine made a mistake, said I, for I was told you desired to see me to-day; besides you sent me word you were not well. She seemed a little abashed at this: *I was* very ill in the morning, she said; and though I was engaged to spend the evening abroad, did intend to have sent an excuse; but finding myself better, I changed my purpose.

Dinner

Dinner was immediately served, and I sat down, but with a reluctance that prevented me from eating. I would have taken my leave soon after dinner, but Mrs. Gerrarde insisted on my staying, and told me, if I refused her, she should think I had taken something amiss of her. She called for cards; I suffered myself to be persuaded, and we fell to piquet.

I played with disgust, and without attention, every minute wishing to break away. Coffee was at length brought in; I begged to be excused from staying; telling Mrs. Gerrarde, I was sure I prevented her from going abroad, but she would take no denial. I was constrained to take a dish of coffee, and was hastening to get it down when the parlour door flew open, and lo! Mr. Faulkland entered the room. If an object the most horrible to human nature had appeared before me, it could not, at that instant, have shocked me half so much. I let the cup and saucer drop from my hand: to say I turned pale, trembled, and was ready to faint, would be too feeble a description of the effect this spectre had on me. I was senseless, I almost died away. Mrs. Gerrarde pretended to be greatly alarmed; she ran for drops, and having given me a few in a glass of water, I made a shift to rise off my chair, and telling her, I should be glad of a little air, tottered to the street-door. I determined to

go home directly, but the universal tremor I was now in, disabled me from walking, and I sat down in the porch to recover myself a little. Mr. Faulkland's having been a witness to the agony his presence had thrown me into, did not a little aggravate the horror and confusion of my thoughts. Whatever *his* were, he had not spoke to me, nor was it possible for me to have remarked his behaviour: I staid not more than two minutes in the parlour after he entered. In this situation you will think my distress would hardly admit of any addition; but the final blow was yet to come. Mrs. Gerrarde had staid a minute in the parlour to speak to Mr. Faulkland after I went out, but presently followed me, and was soothing me with the kindest expressions, when I heard the trampling of horses, and presently beheld Mr. Arnold alighting at the door. I now gave myself up for lost. My mind suddenly suggested to me that Mrs. Gerrarde had contrived a plot upon my innocence; but how she had been able to bring it about, my thoughts were not then disengaged enough to conceive. My mind was all a chaos; I was not able to answer Mr. Arnold when he spoke to me. He soon perceived my disorder, and enquired the cause. Mrs. Gerrarde took upon her to answer, that I was just preparing to go home, when I was taken suddenly ill. I was going abroad, said she, and

and as I ordered the chariot much about this hour, I fancy it is ready, and may as well carry Mrs. Arnold home ; you had best step into the parlour, my dear, (to me) 'till it is brought to the door.

I am now able to walk, madam, said I ; there is no occasion to give you that trouble. Mr. Arnold said, I should not walk by any means ; and Mrs. Gerrarde immediately calling to a servant to order the chariot to the door, said, as she was going out, she would leave me at home herself. Mr. Arnold answered, it would be the best way, and that he should follow soon. The chariot was presently at the door, and I was preparing to get into it, when Mrs. Gerrarde cry'd, Bless me, I had forgot, it will not be so civil to leave the gentleman behind, without saying any thing to him. Mr. Arnold hastily asked, What Gentleman ? Mrs. Gerrarde replied, Mr. Faulkland, *who took it into his head* to make me a visit this evening. She went quickly into the parlour, and strait returned with Mr. Faulkland ; who bowing carelessly to Mr. Arnold, and civilly to me, walked away.

Mrs. Gerrarde stepped into the chariot to me, and ordered it to drive to my house, leaving Mr. Arnold standing motionless at her door.

A total silence prevailed on my side during our short journey home, except to an-

swer in monosyllables Mrs. Gerrarde's repeated enquiries after my health. She set me down at my door, and took her leave without alighting. When I found myself alone, I began to consider the consequences of this evening's fatal interview; an interview, which, though unthought of by me, I judged was contrived to ensnare me. I laid all the circumstances together, and endeavoured to unravel the clue. 'Tis plain to me Mr. Arnold was expected by Mrs. Gerrarde this evening. She sent for me on purpose to betray me; the message, which she pretended was delivered wrong, was only an artifice, in order to impose on Mr. Arnold, that he might imagine she did not expect me. Indeed, he could not possibly think she should send for me on the very evening he was to be with her; and she had so well guarded her contrivance, that it was not easily to be detected. She had sent her message by word of mouth, though she generally wrote them down on paper, but this way would not have been liable to misconstruction: she had told me she was engaged in the evening, yet detained me longer than I meant to stay. From the first of these circumstances, it must appear to Mr. Arnold, that as I had come unwished-for, she wanted to get rid of me; the latter obviously served her own purpose; for it is as clear as daylight, that she laid her plan
so

so as that Mr. Arnold should find Mr. Faulkland and me together. All this I have deduced from a long train of reasoning on the circumstances. But the inexplicable part of the mystery is how she contrived to get Mr. Faulkland, with whom I did not think she was acquainted, to visit her at so fatally critical a juncture. Sure some evil spirit must have assisted her in this wicked scheme: she knew, no doubt, of the promise Mr. Arnold had exacted of me, never to see him. The apparent breach of this promise, she may have art enough to persuade Mr. Arnold was concerted on my side. But I hope I shall be able to clear myself of this cruel imputation to my husband. Truth *must* force its way into his mind, if he is not resolved on my destruction. Perhaps Mr. Faulkland may be secretly Mrs. Gerarde's admirer, and Mr. Arnold is the dupe to her perfidy, as I am the sacrifice to her malice and licentiousness. — 'Tis all a strange riddle, but I cannot remain long in this dismal state of suspense; Mr. Arnold, perhaps, may discover her treachery, while she is endeavouring to destroy me in his good opinion.

I am waiting here like a poor criminal, in expectation of appearing before my judge. I wish Mr. Arnold were come in, yet I dread to see him.

I might have spared myself the anxiety.

Mr. Arnold is just returned, but he has locked himself into another chamber. I will not molest him to-night ; to-morrow, perhaps, he may be in better temper, and I may be able to justify myself to him, and dispel this frightful gloom that hangs over us.

September 13. — Hopes and fears are at an end, and the measure of my afflictions is filled up.

I went to bed last night, but slept not ; the hours were passed in agonies not to be described. I think all griefs are magnified by silence and darkness. I well knew, prepossessed as Mr. Arnold was by my artful enemy, I should find it difficult to excuse myself, or persuade him, that chance, or Mrs. Gerrarde's more wicked contrivance, had been the sole cause of what had given him such offence. I was resolved, however, to vindicate my innocence, and was, in my own thoughts, preparing my defence the greatest part of the night. Towards morning, weariness and grief overpowered me, and I fell asleep, but I enjoyed not this repose long. Some noise that was made in the house suddenly awakened me ; I saw it was broad day, and looking at my watch, found it was past seven o'clock. I rang my bell, and Patty entering my room, I enquired if her master was yet stirring. The poor girl looked aghast, He is gone away on horseback,

horseback, madam, said she, almost two hours ago ; and he ordered his man to put up some linen and a few other things in a small portmanteau. I believe he means not to return to-night ; for he bid me to deliver this letter to you. I opened the letter with trembling hands, from whence I received my doom in the following words :

“ You have broke your faith with me, in seeing the man whom I forbade you to see, and whom you so solemnly promised to avoid. As you have betrayed my confidence in this particular, I can no longer rely on your prudence, or your fidelity. Whatever your designs may be, it will be less to my dishonour if you prosecute them from under your husband’s roof. I therefore give you ’till this day se’nnight to consider of a place for your future abode ; for one house must no more contain two people, whose hearts are divided. Our children remain with me, and the settlement which was made on you in marriage, shall be appropriated to your separate use.

“ I have left home to avoid expostulations, nor shall I return to it ’till I hear you have removed yourself. Spare the attempt of a justification, which can only aggravate the resentment of your already too-much injured husband.”

I have for a while suppressed the tumult

mult in my soul, to give you this shocking letter.

O my Cecilia! What a wretched lot is thy unhappy friend's! To be neglected, forsaken, despised, by a husband that I love! Yet I could bear that: but to be suspected, accused too! to be at once the miserable object of jealousy and scorn! Surely they know nothing of the human heart, who say that jealousy cannot subsist without affection; I have a fatal proof to the contrary. Mr. Arnold loves me not, yet doubts my honour. Cruel, mean, detestable suspicion! Oh that vile woman! 'tis she has done this; like a persecuting dæmon she urges on the ruin which she set on foot.

What can I do? Whither can I fly? I cannot remain here any longer; my presence banishes Mr. Arnold from his home. If I go to my mother under such circumstances, it will break her heart; yet she must know it. I must not wait to be turned out of my own doors. That thought is not to be borne. I will go this instant, no matter whither.

September 15. ——— God preserve me in my senses! I have passed two days and two nights I know not how; in silence and without food, Patty tells me. But I think I am a little recovered. I will write to my mother, and beg of her to open her arms to receive

receive her miserable child. I am collected enough, and know what to say.

I had just dispatched my letter, incoherent as it is, and blotted with my tears, when Patty brought me one that had come by the post. I knew my dear mother's hand on the superscription, and kissed it before I opened it. See, my sister, how the tenderest of parents writes to her unhappy child, whom she fondly believes to be the darling of her husband, and blessed with domestic felicity.

My beloved Sidney,

I find age and infirmities are advancing apace upon me. My last illness shook me severely, and has left a memorandum of what I may expect in the next visit it makes me. Your family cares are now so much enlarged, that I cannot expect, nor do I desire that you should undertake a journey to Sidney-castle to pay me a short visit; yet, my dear, as you are the comfort of my age, I cannot, in the present precarious state of my health, bear to be at such a distance from you; while God permits me strength I will lay hold of his bounty, and endeavour to get to London. You have told me that you are not conveniently circumstanced at South-park as to room; I will not therefore incommode you, but shall content myself with waiting your arrival in town, at your house in St. James's-street; but do not
hasten

hasten your departure from the country on this account. I am in no immediate danger, my dear, only willing to lay hold of an interval of health, to get nearer to you. If God prolongs my life, what joy will it be to me to spend next winter with my darling, and her dear good Arnold, and to feast my eyes with my lovely grandchildren !

If I am called from you, I shall have the comfort of my child's affectionate hands to close my eyes ; and shall leave the world without regret, as I have lived to see my Sidney happy in the arms of a good man, who will supply the loss of parents, and unite in himself those tender ties which nature must soon dissolve.

My prayers for yours, and my dear son's prosperity, I never fail to offer up to Heaven. Your brother George is with me, and desires to be remembered to you ; he purposes staying here the greatest part of the winter.

As I hope to reach London by the latter end of the week, direct your next to me at your own house in town.

I am,

My dear love,

Your most sincerely
affectionate mother,

DOROTHY BIDULPH.

My heart is bursting———O. Cecilia!
What will become of my fond, my dear
venerable parent, when she finds this daughter,
ter,

ter, this comfort of her age, this beloved of her soul, a poor abandoned outcast ; lost to her husband's love, turned out of his doors, despised, disgraced ! My children too —— I must leave them behind —— My God, for what calamities hast thou ordained thy creature ! Tears, tears, you may well flow !

So ! I am relieved, and will endeavour to fortify my soul against the two events, that appear to me horrid as an approaching execution to a guilty wretch, the parting with my children, and the meeting with my mother. As the letter I wrote will miss of her at Sidney-castle, I shall write to London, to prepare her to receive the wretch whom her imagination has figured to her so happy.

Lady V—— ! I hear her coming up stairs —— I cannot conceal my affliction, nor my disgrace.

Lady V—— has left me : left me in astonishment and new horror. Mrs. Gerarde ! Who do you think Mrs. Gerarde is ? She is the aunt of Miss Burchell, that aunt who betrayed her to destruction. Sure this woman was sent into the world for a scourge !

I cannot collect myself to tell you with any method, the conversation that passed between lady V—— and me. She found me with the marks of tears on my face ;
they

they streamed again at the sight of her ; I could not conceal the cause, and I put Mr. Arnold's letter into her hands, for I was not able to tell her the purport of it.

This is Mrs. Gerrarde's doing, said she, the detestable creature ! How could she work on your infatuated husband, to drive him such horrid lengths ? I know not, said I, but I hope my lady V—— believes me innocent. Innocent, she exclaimed ! My dear creature, your sufferings almost make me mad. Do you know that Mrs. Gerrarde has an intrigue with your husband ? I fear so, madam, I replied, but I hoped it was not publick. Poor child, said lady V——, his attachment to her has been no secret, ever since he came down to this country, though probably you were the last to suspect it. I have often dreaded the consequences of it, but never imagined it would have come to this ; I always had a bad opinion of the woman, and only kept up a face of civility to her in her husband's time, on account of her niece, a charming girl that then lived with her ; but since Miss Burchell has left her, I have almost dropt my acquaintance with her ; though my lord, who had an old friendship for captain Gerrarde, persuades me to be civil to her.

The name of miss Burchell had struck me speechless. The clue was now unravelled. With what an unremitting zeal has this base woman

woman gone on in her career of iniquity ? Lady V—, who was intirely taken up with the thoughts of my unhappiness, took no notice of my silence or confusion. What do you mean to do, my dear Mrs. Arnold, said she ? Do you think it is not possible, by the interposition of friends, to disabuse your unfortunate husband ? For unfortunate he is, in a higher degree than yourself, as you have conscious innocence to support you. Oh madam, said I, it is in vain to think of it ! Mrs. Gerrarde has struck the blow effectually. Were Mr. Arnold left to the workings of his own heart, he might, perhaps, relent ; but that woman, like my evil genius and his, will take care to keep his suspicions alive. She possesses his whole heart, and my removal is become necessary, to the quiet of them both. I have taken my resolution, I will immediately quit this house, and leave it to a righteous God to vindicate me in his own time. You should go no where but to my house, said lady V ———, with tears in her eyes, but that I think it an improper situation for you, while Mr. Faulkland is my guest. He will be distracted when he hears of this. I conjured lady V ——— not to tell him : My being parted from my husband cannot long be a secret, said I, but the cause may. Lady V ——— told me that Mr. Faulkland had that very morning set out for Sidney-castle, to see my brother

brother ; having received a letter from him the day before, in which he told him that my mother was going in a day or two to London, and begged he would come and spend a week with him. She added, Mr. Faulkland purposed doing so, and then to return to V ——— hall, as my lord had obtained a promise from him to stay some time longer with them ; at least 'till the old lady's affairs were settled, who had left her fortune to Mr. Faulkland, and to whom my Lord V ——— was executor.

I told lady V — I depended on her friendship, to keep this affair a secret from Mr. Faulkland, lest the heat of his temper should make him take such notice of it, as might render my separation from Mr. Arnold doubly injurious to my character. Lady V — saw the necessity of this caution, and promised to observe it. She expressed great surprize at Mr. Faulkland's visiting Mrs. Gerrarde, whom she said, she did not imagine he had been acquainted with. He is no stranger, said she, to your husband's amour with her, as it has often been a topic of discourse between my lord and me ; and I can hardly think he would be so indelicate as to carry on a love-affair with such an abandoned creature ; especially as I have often heard him express the utmost detestation of her, on account of her robbing you of your husband's affection ; which I had observed for

for a good while. But there is no knowing mankind, added she : if that should be the case, you may depend upon it that vile Gerarde has laid her plan deeper than we are aware of, and would out-swear us all, that Faulkland came to her house for no other purpose, than to have an opportunity of seeing you ; who to be sure, she said, had given him a private hint to meet you there. Now the worst of it is, it is impossible to have this matter cleared up to your husband, without Mr. Faulkland's concurrence, and that you will not consent to. By no means, I replied, I would not for the world have Mr. Faulkland interfere in my justification. If the affair should really be as you have suggested, a little time may, perhaps, discover this wicked woman to Mr. Arnold, and it will not then be so difficult to clear my innocence. At present, her influence over him is too powerful for me to combat with ; and I know he wishes for nothing more than to free himself from the restraint that my presence lays him under.

Lady V--- acquiesced in my opinion, and said, she hoped a little time would chase away the dark cloud that now hung over me. She staid with me the whole day ; it was a day of tears : the dear woman was quite subdued at parting with me. I see you no more, dear lady V---, said I, I shall go to London in two days - - - Preserve
your

your fortitude, dearest Mrs. Arnold, she replied; the time will come when your husband will repent of the bitter distress he has occasioned to you: my lord and I will use our utmost endeavours to convince him of his error. - - - We shall meet in London, my dear, I shall go thither early in the winter on purpose - - Have courage - - Your innocence *must* be cleared. I answered her not, my heart was too full. We embraced, and lady V--- parted from me in silence.

I have written to my mother, and directed my letter to St. James's-street. I would have her prepared for the shock before she sees me; a shock, which I fear she will not be able to sustain.

September 16. ----- Mrs. Gerrarde has never called or sent to me since I was at her house. She has effected her purpose, and is contented without a triumph.

I am prepared for my departure. Tomorrow I turn my back upon my husband's house, and upon my children. I have been weeping over them this hour as they lie asleep in their nurse's arms. But I will look at them no more. --- Poor Patty is almost dead with grief; she would fain go with me, but I have persuaded her to stay: I can rely on her fidelity and her tenderness towards my children; she says, she *will* be as precious of them as the apple of her eye, and will give me an account of their welfare

fare

fare from time to time. Sure Mr. Arnold will not turn *her* out too; she is an excellent manager, and he cannot do without a house-keeper.

I have been debating with myself whether I should write to Mr. Arnold or not, and have at length determined to depart in silence. It is an easy matter for the guilty to make as bold asseverations as the innocent, and nothing which I could now assert would make an impression on him. Had I only his suspicions to combat, there might be hopes: but his *heart* is alienated from me; and while it continues attached to another, I despair of his listening to the voice of reason or of justice. If ever his eyes are opened, his error will prove sufficient punishment to him---Perhaps my mother or my brother may put me in a way---My conduct, in time, I hope, may justify me---Mean while I will not condescend to the weak justification of words.

September 18. ----- I have bid adieu to South-park, and arrived this morning in London in a hired carriage, for I would not take one of Mr. Arnold's. I found my mother at the house in St. James's-street, where I now am: she got here last night, and my letter had thrown her into agonies, from which she had not yet recovered. What have you wrote to me, said she, as she held me in her arms? your dreadful letter has almost

most killed me.--Sure, sure, my dear child, it cannot be true that you have left your husband! What is the cause? What have *you* done? or, What has *he* done? I begged my mother to compose herself a little, and then related to her every circumstance, in the same manner you have had them as they occurred. Her lamentations pierced my heart; she wrung her hands in bitterness of anguish; Why did not the grave hide me, said she, before I saw shame and sorrow heaped upon my child. I came to die in peace with you ---You might have lengthened my days for a while---But you cut them off--My eyes will close in affliction --- A wounded spirit who can bear! Had you died in your cradle, we had both been happy. My child would now have been a cherub! an angel you have been in my eyes, and I am punished for it; but that was *my* crime, not your's. But you are a martyr to the crimes of others.

My mother wept not all this time; I wished she had; her passionate looks and tones affected me more than tears could. My eyes began to run over, her's soon accompanied me, and it a little relieved the vehemence of her grief.

She then began to reproach herself for having listened to lady Grimston's suggestions in favour of Mr. Arnold, and for her own solliciting this fatal marriage. But I stopped her, on a subject which I knew would
so

so much torment her thoughts. I conjured her not to reflect on it in that manner; I told her I knew she had acted for the best, and that nothing but an extraordinary fatality, which could neither be foreseen nor avoided, had made me unhappy. I said I was sure Mr. Arnold had been seduced by the wiles of a wicked woman, for that he was by nature a good man, and that he had more of my pity than of my resentment.

I found it necessary to reconcile my mother to herself on this head; she seemed willing to lay hold on the hint, and turned all her indignation against Mrs. Gerrarde. A *practised* sinner, she called her, for whom nothing could be said in extenuation of her crime.

We now turned our thoughts towards fixing on some other abode. You may be sure Mr. Arnold's house is no place for us; and my mother declared she would not stay another night in it: accordingly we have dispatched her maid to take us lodgings immediately.

September 21.-----We have quickly shifted the scene, my dear Cecilia, and are settled, at least for the present, in very handsome lodgings in St. Alban's-street. We came to them last night, and my mother seems a little less disturbed than she was. I pray God spare her life, but I fear I shall not long enjoy that blessing. She is sadly altered
since

since I last saw her ; a dropical complaint is stealing on her fast, her legs are swelled, and she has intirely lost her appetite ; yet if her mind were a little more at ease, I should hope, that by the assistance she can have here, she might be enabled to hold out against this disorder for a good while. I endeavour to suppress my own grief, that I may not increase her's.

I was surprized to-day by a visitor to my mother. Miss Burchell came to pay her respects to her : I have told you they corresponded. My mother, it seems, had given her notice of the time she intended being in town : the young lady had been to wait on her in St James's-street, and was from thence directed by the servant, who kept the house, to our new lodgings.

She is really a very lovely young woman ; and there is something so insinuating in her manner, that there is no seeing her without being prejudiced in her favour. She changed colour when my mother presented me to her by my name ; but, at the same time, surveyed me with a scrutinous eye. My mother asked her, had she seen Mr. Faulkland since his return to England. She answered, No, with a sigh ; but that she believed he had been at Putney. To see his son, said my mother ? without reflecting, that Miss Burchell had avoided mentioning that circumstance, and stopped upon name-
ing

ing the place where the child was at nurse. Yes, she replied, in a timorous accent, and stealing a look at me. The woman told me, that a young gentleman had been there about six weeks ago, who said he came from the child's father abroad, and made her a handsome present. As I did not then know Mr. Faulkland was returned to England, I should not have suspected it was he himself who had called, if his housekeeper (that gentlewoman in whose care he left me) had not come to me from him. She is settled now in a lodging-house; and Mr. Faulkland, on his coming to London, went to her, to enquire where the child was. She told me he enquired civilly after me, and gave her a letter for me, which the good-natured woman joyfully brought me; but it contained nothing but a bill of a hundred pounds, with two or three lines, polite indeed, but not kind, to inform me it was for the child's use; and I have heard nothing of him since.

My mother told her, that as Mr. Faulkland was returned again, probably to continue in England, she did not despair of his being brought to do her justice: especially as she must suppose the sight of the child had made an impression on him. She then, without ceremony, entered into a detail of my unhappy story: she was full of it; and being, as you know, of a very

communicative temper, made no scruple to inform Miss Burchell of every particular. She seemed very much affected with the story, and grew red and pale by turns; especially at finding her aunt so deeply concerned in it. She exclaimed against her barbarity, reproached Mr. Arnold for his injurious suspicions, and condoled obligingly with me on the wrongs I had received; and yet, my Cecilia, would you believe it, I thought I could discover, through all this, that Miss Burchell was not entirely free from doubt in regard to my innocence. This observation I gathered only from certain looks that she cast at me, as my mother related the passages. There are little minute touches on the countenance sometimes, which are so transient they can hardly be overtaken by the eye, and which, from the passions being strongly guarded that give rise to these emotions, are so slight, that a common observer cannot discover them at all. I am sure my mother did not; but my sensibility was particularly roused at her relating a story that I did not then wish to have divulged; and I was too much interested in the narrative, not to attend precisely to its effects on the hearer. I am neither angry with, nor surprized at Miss Burchell, for her scepticism on this occasion. She loves Mr. Faulkland, and had not herself the power to resist him: she knows he

he once loved me, and may fancy he does so still; nay, thinks perhaps I am not indifferent towards him: she is a stranger to *my* heart; but is convinced, that her aunt is base enough, first to ensnare to vice, and then to betray. Upon the whole, there is nothing unnatural in her suspicions; but I think they could not proceed from a virtuous mind.

Upon Miss Burchell's taking leave, my mother gave her a general invitation to come to her as often as she had leisure; telling her, she must not take it amiss if she did not return her visits, as her health would not permit her to go much abroad.

Miss Burchell, it seems, has a house (not lodgings) in a retired street in Westminster, where she has been ever since she quitted her aunt, to whom she never discovered where she lived. Her fortune enables her to appear very genteelly in the private manner she chuses to live. She goes but seldom into publick, and has but a narrow circle of acquaintance. Those are all of her own sex, and of the best character; and she has had the good fortune to preserve her reputation unsuspected; so that, I hope, she may yet retrieve her error by an advantageous match, should Mr. Faulkland still continue averse to her.

September 28.——I have had a letter from Patty: she tells me, her master is re-

turned home; and adds, 'To be sure, that vile wicked wretch let him know you were gone.' She says, he called for the two dear babes, and kissed them both. Patty carried the youngest to him in her arms, the other in her hand, and she says, he looked troubled. How came you not to follow your lady, Mrs. Martha, said he? She replied, My lady was willing, Sir, that I should stay to look after the children—— And to be a spy upon my actions, I suppose: Is not that to be part of your employment too? Ah! Patty, Patty; Mrs. Arnold had better have looked to her own conduct. Patty made no answer, but retired in tears. Every one in the house, she writes, is broken-hearted; but that Mr. Arnold is never at home, spending his whole time with Mrs. Gerrarde, whom the girl, in the overflowings of her zeal for me, heartily execrates. She informed him, that I was gone to London, and purposed living with my mother, who was now there.

October 7.——I have just received a letter from Lady V—. She tells me she sent twice to invite Mr. Arnold to dine with them, in order, if possible, to lead him into a conversation, by which they hoped, in some measure, to have cleared my innocence, as my lord could take upon him to justify Mr. Faulkland; but he declined coming, not knowing, perhaps, that Mr. Faulkland

Faulkland was absent from V---hall. She said, her lord had gone to South-Park; but either Mr. Arnold was not at home, or denied himself. My lady adds, 'It is a delicate affair to interpose in; yet would I have ventured to have wrote to your husband, if I had been sure that you had no objection to my telling him, that you had made me privy to the cause of your parting: 'tis plain, by his avoiding us, it is a subject he does not care to come to an explanation upon. Let me have your sentiments, and I will act accordingly.'

I shall answer Lady V - 's letter directly, and beg of her to leave the matter as it is. Mrs. Gerrarde's testimony will have more weight than all my good lord or lady could urge in my favour: besides, they are not furnished with sufficient weapons to combat against such an enemy: they know nothing of Miss Burchell's story; my regard to *her* character prevented me from giving my lady this specimen of her aunt's baseness. I suppose the same reason may have closed Mr. Faulkland's lips on that subject: so that they have nothing to alledge against Mrs. Gerrarde, which would help to invalidate her testimony with regard to Mr. Faulkland and me. Mr. Arnold, indeed, knows that she has forfeited her pretensions to modesty; but the delusion of self-love blinds a man in those cases; and he can be-

lieve, that *truth*, *sincerity*, and *justice*, inhabit the bosom of her, whose passion for *him* alone has caused a deviation from chastity.

I cannot think of exposing the poor Miss Burchell by giving up her secret. Though it might contribute to clear me, by turning Mr. Arnold's suspicions on Mrs. Gerrarde, yet would she have great reason to resent it; more especially as she is now, by a blameless life, endeavouring to blot out the memory of her fault. Though my Lady V— is very prudent, her zeal for me, and my lord's good-natured earnestness in my cause, might render them unguarded on the occasion; and should they attempt to make use of this secret, in order to criminate Mrs. Gerrarde, it might, at the same time, bring malicious censures both on Miss Burchell and Mr. Faulkland.

I think, upon the whole, my mother is the properest person to mediate on this nice occasion. When Mr. Arnold comes to town, she can, with due tenderness to the young lady, disclose the whole affair to him. The knowledge of this black part of Mrs. Gerrarde's character, joined to her arguments, may perhaps have some weight; though, to tell you the secret bodings of my heart, I expect not much from this. I have lost my husband's love; Mrs. Gerrarde possesses it all; and who knows whether he even wishes to lose his pretence for abandoning an unhappy wife? I wish however, Mr. Faulkland

land were returned to V---hall : should Mr. Arnold know of his absence at this juncture, he might imagine possibly he was gone in quest of me.

October 12. — How the scene is changed, my sister ! What a melancholy reverse is here, to my late prospect of domestic happiness ! I pass my nights in tears, and bitter reflections on my dismal situation. My days are spent in a painful constraint, to conceal the anguish of my own heart, that I may not aggravate that of my poor mother. My endeavours to be cheerful, I perceive, have a good effect on her : she is much more composed, and seems resigned to our fate, patiently waiting for a change. I think too she is rather better in her health ; she has had the advice of a physician of eminent skill ; the medicines prescribed, he gives us hopes, will keep her disorder at least from gaining ground ; and that she may hold out for some years.

I have prevailed on her not to give Sir George an account of my unhappy story, 'till I hear that Mr. Faulkland has left him ; because I know my brother would conceal nothing from him ; and, if possible, I would have Mr. Arnold's suspicions of *Him* concealed. I have many reasons for this ; my own delicacy would receive a wound by it ; for who knows what judgement Mr. Faulkland might form on this knowledge ? But my most material objection is, should

he attempt to vindicate his own honour, what might be the consequence! I shudder to think of it. I know Mr. Faulkland is rash, when provoked. Rather let my sufferings and my disgrace lie wrapped in oblivion, than bring any disaster on the father of my children.

October 16.——Another letter from Lady V---. She tells me, that Mr. Faulkland is returned from his visit to my brother. He was soon informed of my parting with Mr. Arnold; it is the talk of the neighbourhood; every body lays it on Mrs. Gerrarde. Mr. Faulkland was very inquisitive to learn particulars from my lady, which, he said, he was sure I had told her; but she took care not to give him the least hint which could lead him to suppose that *He* had any share in my fate. She says, he raves like a madman; and that she finds it absolutely necessary to keep him in ignorance of the truth. She was obliged to tell him, that my having discovered Mr. Arnold's amour with Mrs. Gerrarde, she believed, was the sole cause of our separation. He asked her, Was she *sure* there was no other? adding, That he thought my temper had been too gentle, to fly, on a sudden, to such extremes. My lady took occasion to ask him, Whether he did not visit Mrs. Gerrarde? He replied, He did sometimes, having formerly known her at Bath. She
con-

concludes with telling me, That Mr. Arnold is become quite invisible to every friend he has, Mrs. Gerrarde engrossing him wholly.

I hope Mr. Faulkland may not suspect how much *He* is concerned in my misfortune: my absenting myself, for some time before I left home, from V—hall, and my departure from my husband, immediately after my interview with Mr. Faulkland at Mrs. Gerrarde's, may raise some distrust in his mind; but, while it continues merely surmise, he can have no pretence for requiring an explanation from Mr. Arnold; so that, if my husband keeps his own council, which he seems inclined to do, and my lord and lady V— preserve the secret, I shall rest satisfied.

October 20. ——— My mother has wrote to Sir George, and given him a full account of my situation, with a request, which I prevailed on her to make, that he would not take any notice of the affair 'till he saw us. My brother, perhaps, may think of a way, with tenderness and safety, to remove Mr. Arnold's doubts, without farther exposing my reputation, or laying my husband open to mischief. A prudent, cool, and at the same time zealous friend, might devise some means to effect this; but I fear my brother's disregard to Mr. Arnold, his diminished love for me, and his resentment to my mother, will prevent him from engaging

gaging with that alacrity or precaution that the nicety of circumstances may require. I will, therefore, wait with patience, 'till God, in his own time, shall raise me from the state of humiliation into which I am fallen.

October 22. — With what a tortoise pace does time advance to the wretched! how dismal are those hours which are spent in reflecting on lost happiness. O Faulkland! how light was thy transgression, if we consider the consequences, compared to that which has driven me from my home, and from my children! steeled my husband's heart against me, heaped infamy on *my* head, and loaded my mother's age with sorrow and remorse! All this is the fatal consequence of Mr. Arnold's breach of his marriage-vow: all this, and much more, I fear, that is to come.

We keep ourselves entirely concealed from the knowledge of our old acquaintance: not a mortal visits us, but, now-and-then, Miss Burchell; and I have never stirred out of doors but to church.

October 28. — Sir George has answered my mother's letter, just as I feared he would: he speaks of Mr. Arnold with more contempt and aversion, than he does of me with pity or brotherly kindness. He says, 'It is well for him, that Mr. Faulkland knows not of his injurious suspicion of
' him,

‘ him, or he would vindicate himself in a manner he little thinks of.’ He tells us, He does not know (at this distance) how to advise ; but that, as I am of so *patient* and *forbearing* a spirit, he thinks my wrongs may sleep ’till he comes to town, which cannot yet be these three or four weeks, having leases to renew with his tenants, and abundance of other business to do in the country.—So much for George’s tenderness.

October 29.—My comforts are circumscribed within a very narrow compass ; for I cannot reckon one, but what I receive from poor Patty’s letters, who never fails to send me weekly an account of my dear little children. They are all well, thank God, and not yet abandoned by their father ; but even the knowledge of this is embittered by repeated hints of Mr. Arnold’s lost condition. Lost, I may call it ; for his whole soul is absorbed in the mad pursuit of his own ruin. The poor girl, in the bitterness of her indignation, tells me he has made Mrs. Gerrarde a present of a favourite little pad of mine : she says, she had a mind to tear her off, when she saw her mounted upon it.

I wish not to be told of any of Mr. Arnold’s motions, and should forbid Patty to write to me any thing on the subject, but that I fear my letter might fall into Mr. Arnold’s

Arnold's hands: his curiosity might lead him to open it (for the conscious mind will descend to meannesses); and, if he should see my prohibition, he would be satisfied that his servant was too free in her censures. I am sure he is quite unconcerned at my knowing his conduct; but I would not nevertheless, for my children's sake, bring this tender, faithful poor creature into disgrace with him, by convincing him of the liberty she takes, though he may very naturally suspect it.

October 30.—A lady of our acquaintance, who happened to see me at church, came to pay me a visit to-day. It seems, she is intimate with the widow Arnold, who told her, very lately, that she was impatient for the commencement of term, as she then expected the cause depending between her and us would be brought to a final issue, and determined entirely in her child's favour. This account alarmed my poor mother so much, that she could not be easy 'till she sent for our lawyer, who was so obliging as to come upon the first summons. She acquainted him with the cause of her apprehensions; and asked him whether there was any likelihood of the widow's succeeding. He laughed at my mother's fears, and at our antagonist's flourishes, as he called them; and said, he would not give a bent six-pence to ensure Mr. Arnold's
estate

estate to him, which the ensuing term, he says, will put out of the reach of doubt. This assurance has quieted our anxiety on that head. The loss of our suit would indeed be a dreadful blow, as we should have nothing then remaining but my small jointure, for the support of Mr. Arnold, myself, and our two children; not to mention Mrs. Gerrarde, who, I have reason to believe, has been no inconsiderable sharer in Mr. Arnold's fortune.

November 4.—Six melancholy weeks are gone since I have been here, I may say, both a prisoner, and a fugitive. I count the days as they pass, as if I expected some revolution in my fate; yet, whence is it to come? No prospect as yet opens to me. Mr. Arnold's law-affairs will soon call him to town: something may then happen—But does not Mrs. Gerrarde come too? He cannot live without her; and I shall reap no benefit from this, but the chance of seeing my children sometimes perhaps; though he may not bring them with him, or, if he does, he may be cruel enough to refuse me the sight of them. Sir George is cold and dilatory: were he on the spot, something might be done; he might expostulate: my mother too could join arguments to intreaties: Mr. Arnold perhaps might be recovered from his delusion; it is but a perhaps.

November

November 15.—My brother is arrived in town sooner than we expected, and came this evening to pay us a visit. My altered and dejected looks, I believe, shocked him; but George wants tenderness, or at least a capacity of shewing it. After a recapitulation of my story, he asked me, ‘ Could I
‘ be so mean-spirited a creature as ever to
‘ think of living with Arnold again, even
‘ though he should be inclined to desire it?’ I told him, he considered the matter in a wrong light; and that he ought to reflect on my reputation, and the future welfare of my two poor little girls, who would be material sufferers, from the want of my care and attention, as they grew up; not to mention the disadvantages they would enter into life with, by my continuing under an aspersions which might in time become very public, and perhaps be believed too, as I made no doubt but that Mrs. Gerrarde would take pains to propagate it wherever she went. My mother added, Mr. Arnold too might be saved from perdition, if he could be so far convinced of his wife’s innocence, as to be reconciled to her, and live with her again. And pray, said Sir George, how is this to be done, if that damned woman has put it into his head, that Faulkland and you are fond of one another? Do you imagine that he will believe what *you* say? what your brother, or your mother, or even
Faulkland

Faulkland himself, could say to the contrary? I own to you very fairly, that I so much despise the man, that, unless you will give me leave to talk to him my own way, I will have nothing to say to him at all. Would you have me *sue* to him for a reconciliation, and try to persuade him out of the belief of an imaginary injury, which probably he was glad to make a handle of to get rid of you? No, Sidney; you may be as tame as you please yourself, but it does not become your brother to be so. When I go to him, I must insist upon not having rules prescribed to me: your delicacy, in regard to Faulkland's asserting your innocence, I have nothing to say against; but there can be no objection to your brother's vindicating the honour of his family. I saw Sir George's resentment was roused to the highest pitch; his eyes sparkled with indignation, and his whole frame seemed agitated.

Dear brother, said I, I conjure you, (and I fell upon my knees and clasped both my arms round his) do not add to my affliction, by involving yourself and my husband in a fatal quarrel. What difference would it make to me if Mr. Arnold should fall, whether it is by your hand, or Mr. Faulkland's? The loss would be the same; the misfortune, the publication of my disgrace, the same. Your husband, said he, breaking from me, though a little softened, would have as good a chance

a chance as I, if it came to the hazard ; or perhaps he might condescend to take you again (if you will have it so,) without coming to these extremities, if I am suffered to argue properly with him—I will not consent to your seeing him at all, said I, eagerly. The cause is now my own, he answered, coolly ; but I will do nothing to aggravate your distress. I did not like the manner in which he spoke. My mother, who 'till now had been silent, caught the alarm. Let me intreat you, son, said she, to drop the thoughts of any violent methods with Mr. Arnold. If you value your sister's peace, or have any regard to the obedience you owe me, I insist on it, that you neither see him nor write to him, without our knowledge and consent ; and if you do not promise me this, I renounce all ties of kindred or affection to you : your mother has as just a sense of the honour of her family as you can have ; but it is not on so hot a head, and so weak an arm, that she depends to see it justified to the world. Sir George, who was nettled at my mother's spirited rebuke, made her a low bow. No doubt of it, madam, said he, there will be a miracle wrought in my sister's favour. I would have you let her try the experiment of the ordeal : I dare say she would come off victorious, and then Mr. Arnold will do you the favour to take her home again. I wish, said my mother, gravely, that

that there was a possibility of bringing my dear child's innocence to such a proof; I would not hesitate a minute to put it to the trial: but since there is no such a thing *now-a-days*, I will wait 'till God, in his own righteousness, shall judge her cause, and clear her to the world. Therefore, son, I insist upon your promise before you leave me.

I give you my word, madam, answered Sir George, I will not attempt to hold any conference with Mr. Arnold without your knowledge. Will that satisfy you? It does, answered my mother; for I think I can rely upon your word. Sir George left us not very well satisfied with each other; his pride and resentment piqued to the highest. I cannot censure him for it here: he has cause; but the case is a nice and difficult one. The gratification of a private spleen ought not to enter into the measures he should pursue. Glad I am that my mother's properly-exerted resolution has tamed him a little. Though George sometimes fails in the respect which he owes her, yet I never knew him wilfully to disobey her commands, or oppose her inclinations. 'Tis well there is any hold on a disposition so ungentle and self-willed as his.

November 18.—My brother has taken a very handsome house in Pall-mall, and told my mother, between jest and earnest, he is going

going to give her a daughter-in-law, to make up for the loss of her son-in-law. He is, in reality, making his addressee to lady Sarah P. the daughter of a new-created peer. She has a great fortune, he tells me; but I know nothing more of her. I wish him better success in his nuptials (if they take place) than I have had.

Nov. 20.—Mr. Arnold is arrived in town: he came late last night, and his man called this morning to enquire how I did. The poor fellow stole out before his master was up; and was afraid of staying a minute, lest he should be wanted at home. I called him up to the dining-room: I saw an honest shame and sorrow in his countenance. How does your master do, Frank, said I? Has he brought the children to town? No, madam, said he; but they are pure and hearty. I believe my master thought it a pity to bring them out of the fresh air, as long as Mrs. Patty is there to look after them. They are better where they are. I asked him was Mr. Arnold come to town to make any stay? I believe for good-and-all, said he. This ugly law-suit, to be sure, will detain him; but he is come *alone*, said he, with an intelligent nod: I don't suppose though he will continue long so. Well, Frank, said I, I am glad to hear your master and the children are well. Ah, madam! shaking his head

head as he opened the door to go out, it was a woeful day for us when you left South Park. God give every one their reward!

November 22.—I have not seen my brother these two days: he does not know, I believe, that Mr. Arnold is come to town; though, if he did, I am sure he will not break his word; so that I am easy on that particular. My mother says she will go to Mr. Arnold herself, to *reason* with him a little. I shall not oppose it, though I have no hopes of her being able to effect any thing in my favour: she is now laid up with a cold, and is not able to come out of her room; but she pleases herself with the thoughts of this visit, as soon as she is able to make it. She has planned what she intends to say to him; and is resolved to let him into the whole history of Miss Burchell, that he may know, she says, the full extent of Mrs. Gerrarde's wickedness; as what is there of which that woman is not capable, who could set to sale the honour of an innocent, unsuspecting creature, left to her guardianship?

November 23. — Amazing, my dear Cecilia! I thought I should wonder no more at any thing, yet is my wonder now raised to astonishment—I have just received a letter from lady V—. I have read it over and over again, and yet scarce can believe my senses. Here it is in her own words.

‘I suppose

‘ I suppose you know, my dear Mrs. Arnold, that your husband is in town ; and
‘ that he left Mrs Gerrarde behind him for
‘ no other reason, I imagine, but that he
‘ did not chuse to be quite so scandalous as
‘ to let her travel with him ; for we heard
‘ that she purposed following him in a few
‘ days. Patty, I conclude, may have informed you of thus much ; but the extraordinary part of the intelligence, I believe, is reserved for me to acquaint you with.
‘ Know then that Mrs. Gerrarde is eloped, no-body knows whither. *Good*, say you ; good, should *I* say too ; but for the conclusion of my story. It is with Mr. *Faulkland* she is eloped : ’tis positively true ; she went off with him in triumph last night in her own chariot, and neither of them have been heard of since. I own I am so much confounded at this, I scarce know what I write.

‘ I am very glad, for your sake, that bad creature has quitted your husband ; but that she should have drawn my cousin Faulkland in, is matter of serious concern to me. It is evident the plan was previously concerted between them ; for I am informed to-day, that Mrs. Gerrarde’s maid decamped at the same time, and took with her every thing valuable belonging to her mistress, several of her drawers being found open and empty. Mr. Faulkland’s

‘ land’s servants have also disappeared ; so
‘ that we cannot conjecture which way they
‘ are gone.

‘ Mr. Faulkland, who was about leaving
‘ us, asked my permission to give a ball to
‘ the neighbouring ladies in our new room,
‘ which is just finished. As I concluded he
‘ would ask no-body but our own acquaint-
‘ ance, I readily consented ; and my lord,
‘ you know, is fond of those frolics. I own
‘ I was surprized to see Mrs. Gerrarde
‘ amongst the company, as undaunted as
‘ the *modestest* face there. I would not how-
‘ ever affront Mr. Faulkland so much, as
‘ to shew any disrespect to one, who was, at
‘ that time, *his* guest ; but I was out of all
‘ patience to find that *she*, along with several
‘ others, was asked to supper ; my too-
‘ good-natured lord joining in the invitation.
‘ Mr. Faulkland made a pretence to wait on
‘ her home, and the audacious creature took
‘ that opportunity to march off with him.

‘ Now, as Faulkland really purposed
‘ leaving V—hall the next day, I think it
‘ would have been but decent in him to have
‘ forebore this piece of barefaced libertinism,
‘ ’till he was fairly from under *our* roof. He
‘ have made his assignation in any ohter
‘ place ; but, I suppose, the lady had a mind
‘ to shew the world she is above restraint,
‘ and chose to make her infamy a sort of
‘ triumph.

‘ I am

‘ I am quite angry with my lord, for only
‘ laughing at this, and calling it a piece of
‘ spirited gallantry in them both. He says, he
‘ is delighted to think how your good man
‘ will shake his ears, when he hears his mi-
‘ stress has left him in the lurch and gone off
‘ with another lover. I should smile too ; but
‘ that it makes me sad to think, that Mr.
‘ Faulkland, of whom I had so good an opini-
‘ on, should so impose upon my judgement,
‘ and forfeit his own character, for so vile a
‘ creature.

‘ Pardon me, my dear madam ; I am so
‘ full of my own reflections, on the interest
‘ I take in this affair, that I have been for-
‘ getful of how much more moment it may
‘ be to *you*. Heaven grant that your hus-
‘ band may think of making himself
‘ amends, in returning to a faithful and ami-
‘ able wife, for the loss of a deceitful, jilt-
‘ ing mistress. Surely this event must open
‘ his eyes, or he deserves to lose them. I
‘ hope to embrace you in London in a very
‘ little time : ’till then, believe me,

‘ My dear Mrs. Arnold,

‘ Your most assured friend and servant,
V—ball, Nov. 12. ‘ A. V.’

Well, my Cecilia, what say you to this ?
Are you not as much surprized as I am ? Mr.
Faulkland to emerge at last the favourite
gallant of Mrs. Gerrarde ! Prodigious ! I
confess, my dear, I am so selfish as not to
participate

participate with lady V—— in her uneasiness on this occasion. That Mrs. Gerrarde flies from my husband, I am glad ; and that Mr. *Faulkland* is the very man she chose to fly with, I am still gladder : he, of all men living, I would have wished (though least expected) to be the person. This explains every thing that is passed. Surely as lady V—— says, this *must* open Mr. Arnold's eyes. I can now discover a double reason for my poor deluded man's having his imagination poisoned with jealousy. Mrs. Gerrarde did not aim singly at separating my husband and me : this, perhaps, was but a secondary consideration ; or who knows whether it was at all intended ? But she most certainly designed to secure herself against all suspicions, by making me the object of them ; and effectually to blind Mr. Arnold, persuaded him, that Mr. *Faulkland's* visits, made to her, were only in the hope of seeing me.

Let her views have been what they would, this event was beyond my hopes. Some glimmerings of comfort begin to break in upon me. Methinks my heart feels much lighter than it did. How Sir George will stare at this account ! My mother will lift up her eyes ; but she has no opinion of Mr. *Faulkland's* morals, and therefore will be less surprized. I pity Miss Burchell : this is an irremediable bar to our hopes ; faint and
unsupported

unsupported as they were made before, they must now entirely vanish.

November 24.—I gave you a copy of lady V—'s letter, while the subject was warm at my heart, and before I shewed it to any one ; but my mother and my brother have now both seen it. My mother (just as I expected,) without any great emotions of surprize, only exclaimed against their wickedness ; but said, she could not help rejoicing in it, as *I*, she hoped, would derive happiness from their accumulated crimes. Sir George read the letter twice over before he uttered a word ; and then said, It was *strange* ; upon his soul, most unaccountable ; and that either Faulkland was run mad, or that woman had bewitched him. When he was with me at Sidney-Castle, he did not, said he, so much as mention her. I asked him, whether he was acquainted with Mr. Arnold (for I had written him word of your marriage, when he was abroad ?) He told me, he had seen both you and him two or three times, at lord V—'s ; but that, as he did not wish to renew his acquaintance with you, he had never visited your husband. I presume he was not then a stranger to his connection with Mrs. Gerrarde ; at least to the conjectures of the neighbourhood upon it : but as it was then but a matter of opinion, and he knew not of the difference between you and your husband, 'tis probable he did not chuse to

to disgust me more against my brother-in-law, by hinting at this circumstance. He expressed great acknowledgements to my mother, when I told him of the notice she had taken of Miss Burchell; though, he said, he found (from my account of your marriage) that she had deferred her conference with that young lady, 'till it was too late for her testimony to be of any service to him. As I knew nothing of what had passed between my mother and Miss Burchell, I could give him no satisfaction on that subject; and the recollection of past transactions being equally disagreeable to us both, I avoided ever mentioning them after our first conversation; nor do I remember that Mrs. Gerrarde's name occurred once.

My mother now began to exult over Sir George, and took advantage of the surprize and consternation that Lady V—'s letter had thrown him into. This is your boasted friend, said she,; the man whose *honour* and *generosity* were not to be questioned, and whose *utmost* crime was a youthful folly that he was surprized into with a silly girl. I am pleased, however, that *this* has proved I was not so grossly mistaken in believing him a loose man. Mrs. Gerrarde is the fittest mate for him, and I am glad they are gone together.

Sir George was too much mortified at the flagrant misconduct of his friend to attempt

excusing him : he contented himself with repeating, It was the strangest thing he ever knew in his life.

My mother then told him Mr. Arnold was come to town ; and that, as things had taken such a turn, she hoped herself to be able to bring him to the use of his judgment ; and therefore thought it would not be at all necessary for my brother to interfere. Sir George said, With all his heart ; if her ladyship should be able to patch up a reconciliation that would save his sister's credit, and she could be so *extremely* pliant as to think of living with such a husband again, he should not give himself any further trouble about the matter ; but in *his* opinion, the affair wore a much odder aspect than it did before. I find Mr. Faulkland's behaviour sticks with him, and has a little cooled his zeal towards him.

November 25——I have had a letter from Patty, who confirms my lady V—'s account of the lovers flight ; and she tells me one of Mrs. Gerrarde's servants is gone off express to town ; I suppose to bring Mr. Arnold the news : for they are all in confusion at her house, and know not what is become of their mistress ; but they are certain she is gone with Mr. Faulkland. Patty adds, The servants believe this scheme had been long concerted, Mr. Faulkland having
been

been a private visitor to their mistress for a good while.

I must confess I am astonished at it : it has sunk the man extremely in my opinion.

November 26. Miss Burchell has just been here. Poor creature she is quite stunned with the news : she could scarce believe it at first, 'till my mother desired I would shew her lady V—'s and Patty's letter, which corroborated all she said. She then gave way to tears and lamentations ; saying, That cruel woman was born to be the destruction of every-body she had any connection with. *I* have found it so ; *you*, madam (to me), have done so too ; Mr. Arnold, I believe, has been a great sufferer ; Mr. Faulkland is *now* her victim. Inconsiderate and barbarous as he is, I grieve for him.

November 30.—I have heard nothing of Mr. Arnold. Indeed it is hardly possible that I should : we are shut up here from all commerce with the world. My mother's illness has confined her to her bed-chamber ; we admit no visitors, and I never leave her. I long to know how he takes the ingratitude of his mistress ; but I see no-body who converses with him. My brother and Miss Burchell are the only people we see. The latter is pretty often with us ; as for Sir George, he only looks in upon us now and then, and we all seem in an awkward situation. I wish my mother were well enough

to call on Mr. Arnold: I am very anxious to know what his sentiments are; at least in regard to Mrs. Gerrarde.

December 6.——I have been almost asleep, my dear Cecilia, for this week past; but I have been roused this morning in a most extraordinary manner. Sir George called on us; he ran up stairs in a violent hurry; and had a countenance when he entered the room; that spoke wonders before he opened his mouth. He hardly gave himself time to ask me how I did (though he had not seen me for three days), before he took a bundle of papers out of his pocket, which he gave me. 'Tis from Faulkland, said he, and may be worth your knowledge. Upon opening the cover, I found it contained at least, four sheets of paper, written on every side. Bless me, brother, said I, do you expect I should take the trouble to read all this? He answered, You may read it at your leisure: you will find it will pay you for the the mighty trouble of a perusal. Sir George left me presently; and having read this extraordinary letter to myself, for I happened to be in my own room when my brother came to me, I fate me down to give you a copy of it. My mother, who coughed almost the whole night, is now endeavouring to get a little sleep; so that I will scribble on as fast as I can, while I have no interruption.

Boulogne,

Miss Sidney Bidulph.

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Boulogne, Nov. 30, 1704.

My dear Bidulph,

I am in haste to vindicate myself to you, but in much more haste to do so to Mrs. Arnold; who, if she bestows a thought at all on me, must, I am sure, hold me in the utmost contempt; and great reason would she have, if things were always as they appear. Methinks I see her beautiful scorn at hearing I had carried off Mrs. Gerrarde. What a paltry fellow *you* must think me too. And yet I *have* carried her off, and she is now in my possession, not displeased with her situation; and I might, if I would, be as happy as Mrs. Gerrarde can make me: but I assure you, Sir George, I have no designs but what are for the good both of her soul and body; and I have hitherto treated her like a vestal. What a paradox is here, say you? But have patience 'till I tell you the story of my knight-errantry.

You are to know then, that as Arnold's amour with Mrs. Gerrarde was no secret at V—hall, from the moment I heard it, I meditated a design of breaking the detestable union; not out of regard either to him or her, but in hopes of restoring, to the most amiable of women, a besotted husband's heart, which nothing but downright magic, infernal witchcraft, could have robbed her of. The woman is handsome, 'tis true; but she is a silly toad, and as fantastic as an

ape. I had formed this design, I say, from the first notice I had of the intrigue ; and in consequence of this, resolved to renew my acquaintance with Mrs. Gerrarde : for I had *known* her before ; known her to my cost. She it was, this identical devil, whom I have now in my power, that was the cause of Miss Burchell's misfortune ; and therefore the remote cause of my losing Miss Bidulph. Had it not been for her, I should never have had the fall of that unhappy girl to answer for. I should not, I say, (mark that) ; for the mercenary witch was determined to sell her to somebody, when my ill stars threw me in her way. I do not rank this affair in the number of capital crimes ; and yet I never think of it without a pang. If half of my fortune would retrieve the girl's peace of mind, I would give it freely : but it is past now, and cannot be helped. She had the good fortune never to be suspected ; and if she keeps her own council, probably never will. If I die a batchelor (as I believe I shall,) I will leave her my whole fortune. What can a man do more ?

How I ramble from my subject ! I meant only to tell you what my design was in carrying off Mrs. Gerrarde. In order to effect it, as I said before, it was necessary for me to renew my acquaintance with her ; and accordingly I put on a bold face, and made her a visit. She was not surprized at this, our
for mer

former intimacy giving a sufficient pretence for it. She received me with a pleased familiarity, which convinced me my company was far from being disagreeable to her ; and I am sure, had my views been other than they were, I should have met with as kind a reception as my heart could have wished ; for she certainly thought of retaining me in her service unknown to Arnold. I was soon aware of this ; for, though she often desired to see me, she always contrived it at such times, as she was sure, of not being surprized by him. This was, in some measure, meeting my purpose half way ; but though I wanted to disengage her from Arnold, I did not mean to sacrifice myself to her ; and our views, in the material point, were very different : mine were only to part her from her gallant ; her's were to share her favours between us : for she did not intend to let go her hold on him ; and I believe my backwardness, in pushing my good fortune, began to disgust her ; but the time for carrying my plan into execution was not yet arrived ; it could not be 'till Arnold's departure from South-Park. I meant to carry Mrs. Gerrarde away with the appearance of her own consent ; and I knew this was impossible, whilst her lover remained so near her. I had formed but a rough sketch of my plan when I received your letter, which summoned me to Sidney-Castle ; and I resolved not to apprise you of it, 'till my

enterprize was crowned with success ; more especially as you were then quite ignorant of your sister's wrongs.

On my return from visiting you, the first news I heard at V—hall was, that Mr. Arnold and his lady were parted. I curst my own dilatoriness, that I had not executed my plan before things were brought to such extremities ; for I well knew it was that artful fiend who had occasioned it, though I then little thought how fatally *I* had contributed towards the misfortune of the ever-amiable and most respectable of women.

Lady V.— told me, that your sister, having discovered her husband's infidelity, had left him on that account ; but my lord soon let me into the whole secret. Oh ! Sir George, that angel, who deserved the first monarch in the universe, to be cast off by an undiscerning dolt ! and *I*, tho' innocently, the accursed cause. I cannot think with patience of what the divine creature has suffered on my account ; but was it not all, from the beginning, owing to Mrs. Gerarde, that avenging fury, sent on earth as a scourge for the sins of me and of my ancestors ; — I rave—— but no wonder—I am mad upon this subject.—But to return : I then recollected, that the day before I set out for Sidney-Castle, I received a message from Mrs. Gerrarde in the morning, desiring my company to drink coffee with her that evening.

ing. I obeyed the summons, little expecting to meet Mrs. Arnold at her house, whom I had never seen there before. The effect my presence had on her extremely surprized me: she presently quitted the room. Mrs. Gerrarde took that opportunity of telling me, that she had dropped in on her very unexpectedly; but as she supposed she would go directly away, we should have an hour to chat by ourselves. She then followed your sister out, and I remained alone in the parlour. Whilst I was reflecting on this odd rencounter, which I did not then imagine had been brought about by design, Mrs. Gerrarde came into me, saying, your sister was so ill she was under a necessity of accompanying her home, and had ordered her chariot for that purpose: she made an apology for being obliged to leave me, and said she should be glad to see me the next day. I took my leave and in going out saw Mr. Arnold at the door, which I judged was the true reason of Mrs. Gerrarde's dismissing me.

I set out for Wiltshire the next morning; and though there was something odd in the whole of this incident, I believed it was owing to chance alone, and thought no more of it; 'till upon my Lord V—'s telling me the true cause of your sister's disgrace, I found that this serpent had laid the whole plan on purpose to destroy her. You see (for to be

sure you know all the particulars) how she seduced the innocent Mrs. Arnold into this fatal visit, having first engaged me to come at the very point of time when she knew the husband would surprize us; for *his* coming, you may be satisfied, was not unexpected.

I own to you, Sir George, in the first motions of my rage, I could have stabbed Arnold, Mrs. Gerrarde and myself; but my Lord V— calmed my transports, by telling me that it was your sister's earnest request that this detestable secret should be kept from my knowledge; and that lady V—, who had entrusted him with it, would never forgive him if she knew he had divulged it. This reflection brought me back to my senses, and I burned with impatience to execute my first plan, which Mrs. Gerrarde's repeated crimes now called upon me to accelerate. I communicated my design to lord V—, who was delighted with it; for he perfectly adores your sister. This, said he, though not such a vengeance as that wicked woman deserves, must, in the end, be productive of what you wish, and Mrs. Arnold may be restored to her peace, without injury to her character, or mischief to any-body.

Having settled my measures with lord V—, I went to pay a visit to Mrs. Gerrarde. The cockatrice affected to speak with surprize and concern of your sister's separation from her husband. I asked her,
had

had she, who was so intimate with both, heard any reason assigned for it? She shook her head, and by a pretended sorrow in her looks, and a mysterious silence, invited me to press for an explanation of her meaning. She told me at length, with a seeming reluctance, that ‘poor Mrs. Arnold, though to be sure she was a sensible woman, was not without the little frailties and passions of her sex; and that *astonishing* and *groundless* as her suspicions were, she had taken it into her head to be jealous of Mr. Arnold; and with whom do you think, of all people in the world, she suspects him?’ I cannot imagine, said I. Why truly with *me*, replied the undaunted Jezabel, and looked as if she expected I should be as much amazed as she pretended to be. I affected to laugh at it; and changing the discourse, put an end to my visit.

The measures I had to observe required some management. It would not answer the full extent of my purpose to rob Mr. Arnold of his dear, if it did not appear at the same time that she had left him with her consent. To bring about this it was necessary that the flight on her part should seem premeditated; which would not carry any face, unless she took with her such of her moveables as were most valuable. This I knew could not be done without the assistance of her maid, whom I therefore not only resolved to

to trust, but also to make her a partner in her mistress's elopement.

Having settled thus much of my plan in my own mind, I began my operations, by making the maid presents every time I visited the mistress; and I took care to give those visits as much the air of an amour as I possibly could. I dare swear the girl thought Mrs. Gerrarde and I were upon the best terms imaginable. I affected to come at such hours as I was sure Mrs. Gerrarde was alone; I always made my visits very short, as if through fear of being surprized with her; and went so far as to leave my chariot (when I came in it) at a distance from the house, and walked to it alone, with the caution of one fearful of being observed. It was a matter of indifference to me whether Mrs. Gerrarde knew of this or not; my business was only to excite suspicions of an intrigue amongst her servants, in order to answer a future purpose: but if she were to know with what extreme precaution I visited her, my prudence could not but be very agreeable to her: she had her measures to observe as well as myself. As it was of consequence to her to conceal our acquaintance from Arnold's knowledge, she must necessarily be pleased at the pains I took (without her laying herself open in making the request) to conceal it from him; and she saw I was
as

as careful as she could wish, never to interfere with him.

In short, we carried on a private intercourse, that, if it could not be called gallantry, was something very like it; for I amused, complimented, and flattered her so agreeably, that I believe she began to think herself sure of me, and wondered I did not make a better use of the favourable disposition she was in towards me; but I trifled with such dexterity, that even she, with all the cunning she is mistress of, could not possibly fathom my design.

Having thus laid the foundation of my plot, I made no doubt of being able to execute it, with my lord V—'s assistance: he was in raptures at the thoughts of our enterprize, and swore he would never have forgiven me, if I had not allowed him a share in it. He said, I would give my right-hand to make Mrs. Arnold happy; adding, besides it will save her husband from destruction; for, to my knowledge, that woman has already almost ruined his fortune.

I asked him, might we venture to let my lady into the secret? He said, by no means; my lady was too squeamish to be trusted with such a notable exploit; but, when the affair was over, he would take upon him to excuse me to her, after he had diverted himself a little with her surprize.

I fretted

I fretted to death at Arnold's staying so long in the country, as it delayed my enterprize. There was one circumstance that a little compensatsd for this vexation; and that was, that my long stay at V—hall, which could be no secret to him, though he dropped visiting there on purpose to avoid me, might in some measure help to efface his injurious suspicions with regard to his lady and me; besides, it gave the better colour to my other designs.

At last the long-sought-for opportunity arrived. Arnold was obliged to go to London on his Law-affairs. I took care to inform myself of the day from Mrs. Gerrarde's maid; and learnt at the same time that her mistress purposed going to town in a week after; for she still endeavoured to save appearances, and dared to the last to pretend to reputation. I proposed giving a ball, to take my leave of the ladies, on the night subsequent to the day fixed for Arnold's departure from South-park. My lord, almost as anxious for the event as myself, immediately dispatched invitations all over the neighbourhood: there was not a person of any fashion left unasked. Mr. Arnold and Mrs. Gerrarde, you may be sure, were not forgot. From the former, as we expected, we received a civil apology; from the latter, a message that she would be sure to come.

This

This was at the distance of eight days from the appointed time. In the interim, I continued to visit Mrs. Gerrarde as usual, and took care to bespeak her for a partner. Arnold went to town as opportunely as we could wish. I called on Mrs. Gerrarde the same morning; and having my lord's permission for it, engaged her to come early enough to drink tea, as there were a great many ladies invited for the same purpose; and, at going away, I dropped a few mysterious hints to her maid.

In the evening there was a very large company met at V—hall; and having concerted my whole plan, when the ladies were engaged at the tea-table, I slipped out, mounted my horse, and rode to Mrs. Gerrarde's house. I desired to see her maid; and, taking her aside, told her not to be surprized; but that her lady was to go off with me that night: that the thing had, for certain reasons, not been determined on 'till that very evening: that I had just snatched a minute to desire her to get all her ladies trinkets together, and whatever money and bills she might have in her escrutore. In order to this, I gave a parcel of small keys, which I had carried in my pocket for the purpose; and bid her hold herself in readiness against seven o'clock, when a person should call on her, who would conduct:

conduct her to a place where she would find her lady and me.

I needed no arguments to persuade the girl; the thing appeared plausible enough: she was fully convinced of the intimacy between her mistress and me; and knowing her too well to have a doubt of her baseness, she concluded I acted by Mrs. Gerrarde's directions, and promised punctually to obey them. She said, she could easily convey away in the dark as many things as she could conveniently carry; and, to avoid observation from the rest of the servants, she would wait at a cottage hard by, which she named to me, 'till her conductor arrived.

Whether any of the keys I gave her would fit the locks or not, I was not much concerned; if they did not, I concluded she would think her mistress had made a mistake; and that she would force them open, rather than fail. Having settled this material point, I got back to my Lord V---'s, without having been missed by the company.

Our ball was very well conducted; I danced with Mrs. Gerrarde, and we passed a very agreeable evening. We supped at twelve, and she had ordered her chariot to come a little after that hour; but I had given my fellows their cue. As the dancing was not renewed, the company broke up between one and two. Mrs. Gerrarde was
one

one of the first that offered to go; but as her servants were not to be found, she was detained 'till every-body else had taken their leave. At length her coachman and footman were found in the cellar, with one of my men, all so drunk that they were not able to stand. Her servants were really so, and mine counterfeited so well, there was no discovering the cheat. In this emergency, nothing was more natural than the offering my servants to attend her home, and of course to wait on her myself to see her safe. She readily accepted the first offer, but declined the other. This was easily got over; I handed her into her chariot, and stepped in after her. Our route was settled: we drove from my lord V---'s door; and turning short from the road that led to Mrs. Gerrarde's house, we struck down a lane which was to carry us by cross-roads to our first destined stage, which was at the distance of seven miles. This was no other than a poor gardener's house, to which place two of my emissaries had been dispatched that day to wait our coming, with a travelling chariot, and 4 stout horses. I had taken care, according to promise, to send a trusty groom for the maid, with a boy to carry her luggage. They were both well mounted, and had orders to carry her to an inn on the road to Rochester, and within about a mile of the town. This inn
was

was kept by a fellow, who had formerly been my servant; I had placed him there, and he was entirely at my devotion. He had already received his instructions, and his house was to be our second stage. I concluded the maid had arrived there long before us, having had six or seven hours the start of us, and the place was not more than twenty miles from her own house.

Mrs. Gerrarde was not immediately aware of our going out of the road; she was in high spirits, and I kept her in chat. As soon as she perceived it, she cried out, with some surprize, Lord, Mr. Faulkland! where is the fellow carrying us? He has missed his way. She called to him; but the coachman, who had orders not to stop unless I spoke to him, only drove the faster. Pray do call to him, said she; the wretch has certainly got drunk with the rest of the servants. I told her there was no possibility of turning in the narrow road in which we then were: that when we got out of it, I would speak to the coachman; and begged of her, in the mean while, not to be frightened. The lane was a very long one, but our rapid wheels soon carried us to the end of it, where I had appointed Pivet and one of my footmen to meet us on horseback. I had another servant behind the chariot, whom I purposed to send back with it in the morning.

At the sight of two horsemen, who were apparently waiting for us, she screamed
out,

out, Oh ! the villain he has brought us here to be robbed. She had a good many jewels on her, and, to say the truth, had some reason for her fears. The chariot had now got on a good open road, and the horses rather flew than galloped. The two horsemen joined us, and kept up with us at full speed. I saw she was heartily frightened, and thought it time to undeceive her. I was not ill-natured enough to keep her longer under the apprehensions of highwaymen, and thought she would be less shocked at finding there was a design upon her person, than on her diamond ear-rings. Now, said I, taking one of her hands with rather more freedom than respect, since we are out of all danger of discovery, or any possibility of pursuit, I will tell you a secret ; and I spoke with an easy assured tone. She drew her hand away. What do you mean, Sir ? Nothing, madam, but to have the pleasure of your company in a little trip I am going to take : believe me, you are not in the least danger ; you are under my protection ; those are my servants that you see riding with us ; and you may judge of the value I set upon you, by the pains I have taken to get you into my possession. Lord, Mr. Faulkland ! why sure you can't be serious ! Never more so in my life, madam ; I have long had a design upon you ; but your connection with Mr. Arnold — *My connection with Mr. Arnold,* Sir ! interrupting me ; I don't

don't understand you!—Come, come, Mrs. Gerrarde; you and I are old acquaintance, you know; 'tis no time for dissembling. He has been a happy man long enough: 'tis time for a woman of your spirit to be tired of him; especially as I may think I may say, without vanity, you do not change for the worse in falling into my hands. The lady had now discovered her courage; she was no longer in fears of being robbed, and her spirits returned. You audacious creature! how dare you treat me thus? Have you the assurance to insinuate that there was any thing criminal in my attachment to Mr. Arnold and his family? My dear madam, I accuse you of no attachment to any of his family; he himself was the only favoured person—Sure there never was such an impertinent wretch!—But I know the author of this scandal: it was Mrs. — (and she dared to profane your sister's honoured name); but I despise her; and Mr. Arnold shall soon know how I have been affronted; and she fell a crying.—My dear Mrs. Gerrarde, I beg your pardon; I did not mean to offend you: if Mr. Arnold admired you, he did no more than what every man does who sees you. I beseech you to compose yourself; by all that is good, I mean you no harm; be calm, I conjure you, and don't spoil the prettiest face in England with crying. A daring, provoking creature, she sobbed; what could put

put such an attempt as this in your head? and to what place are you carrying me? Only to France, my dear creature: have you ever been there? To France, to France! she exclaimed; and do you dare to think you shall carry me there? Oh! you'll like it of all things, said I, when you get there.

—What do you think her reply was? Why, neither more nor less than a good box in the ear. I caught hold of her hand, and kissed it: you charming vixen, how I admire you for your spirit! She endeavoured to wrest her hand from me; but I held them both fast, for fear of another blow. Base, insolent, ravisher, villain! As she rose in her epithets, I replied with, lovely, charming, adorable, tender, gentle creature —She cried again; but they were spiteful tears, and did not create in me the least touch of that pity, which, on any other occasion, they might have moved me to.

I was glad our altercations had a short truce, by the chariot's stopping at the gardener's cottage, where I had ordered my equipage to wait. All the family were in bed but the man's wife, who came curt'sying to the door. I led, or rather lifted, Mrs. Gerrarde out of the chariot; for she would not give me her hand; and begging she would repose herself for a few minutes, whilst I gave orders to my servants, put her into the good woman's hands. She went sullenly in, without making me any
answer

answer: and seeing nobody but the old woman, she was convinced that complaints, or an attempt to escape, would be equally fruitless, and so prudently acquiesced. I soon dispatched my orders: I made the footman, who came behind the chariot, mount the box, and directed him to an inn in the next village to Mrs. Gerrarde's house, and from thence to send it home by some one who did not know to whom it belonged. I then ordered my own equipage to the door; and entering the cottage, told the lady I was ready to attend her. The old woman presently vanished; so that seeing nobody to apply to, she suffered me very quietly to put her into my chariot; and I placed myself by her. It was made on purpose for travelling, and I took care to have nothing but wooden windows; to which I had the precaution to add a couple of spring-locks, which shut on drawing up, and were not without difficulty to be opened. One of the windows was already up, and I flurled up the other as soon as I got into the coach. It was a fine moonlight morning, the postillion cracked his whip, and, though the roads were deep and dirty, the four horses darted away like lightning.

I believe, madam, said I, you are by this time convinced that my scheme is too well laid to be baffled by any efforts you can make. I mean to you treat with due respect, and beg you will use me with a little

little more gentleness than you have done ; that is all the favour I shall ask in return, 'till you yourself are disposed to shew me more.

You are the most amazing creature, said she, that ever breathed ! What is the meaning that, in the whole course of our acquaintance, your behaviour never gave me room to believe that you were serious in your designs on me, and now at once you souse upon your prey like a hawk ? I'll answer you in two words, said I. When we first met, you had a husband ; since the renewal of our acquaintance (you'll pardon me), it was no secret that you had a favoured lover in Mr. Arnold : I am not of a temper to solicit a lady by stealth, and I would not give a pinch of snuff for the woman who is not entirely at my disposal. Your attachments to Arnold forbid this, and I was determined to have you all to myself. My attachments to Mr. Arnold ! cried she, impudently, again. Ay, said I, coolly, it began to be talked of so openly, that your reputation was mangled at every tea-table in the country ; and had you staid much longer there, you would have found yourself deserted by every female of character that knew you. Mr. Arnold's parting with his wife, was by every-body charged to your account ; and as she is reckoned a very *good sort* of a woman (was not that a pretty phrase ?) every one took her part, and were not sparing in their invectives against

against you. Add to all this that Arnold has certainly run out of his fortune, and is so involved that it will not be possible for him long to make those returns of generosity which your merit deserves.—You and I have been acquainted long; I am no stranger to your circumstances; I know, at Captain Gerrarde's death, your pension as his widow, and the very small jointure at Ashby, was the whole of your income. Arnold's love, it is apparent, has hitherto been bountiful; how long it could be in his power to continue it so, may be a question worth your considering.

I found I had mortified her pride, by mentioning the narrowness of her circumstances, and the demolition of her character. If all you say *were* true, Sir, which is far from being the case, (with a toss of her head,) you will find it no very easy matter to make me amends for what I shall perhaps lose for ever by this violence of yours, notwithstanding the *smallness* of my income, which you seem so well informed of. I have a considerable sum of money, and some valuable jewels, lying by me, of which my servants may very probably rob me. I assured her upon my honour, I would make good to her every thing she should lose through my means, and would take care her situation should never again be upon the same precarious footing which it had been. I did not chuse to mention the circumstance
of

of my having secured her maid and her money too ; I reserved that for an agreeable surprise. I had measures to observe ; I did not want to be on good terms with her too soon for obvious reasons, as nothing was farther from my heart than a thought of gallantry.

For this purpose, I assumed a more distant behaviour, and affected to shew her something like respect. I did not drop the least hint of my knowing that Mr. Arnold had made his lady uneasy on my account, much less that I suspected her for the wicked contriver of that mischief. I deferred the discussing of this point 'till a more favourable opportunity should offer, when it would be in my power to make a better use of it.

My design was by degrees to make her satisfied enough with her situation, not to wish to return to Arnold. When I had once brought her to this, I judged it would not be difficult to carry her itill farther, to the point was aimed at ; and that I, to write a letter to him of my dictating. You will think this was a strange expectation, and yet it was what I resolved to accomplish. I knew the turn of the mind I had to deal with : bring a woman of this sort into good-humour, and it is easy to wheedle her into compliance. She has no solid understanding ; but possesses, in the place of it, a sort of flashy wit, that imposes on common hearers, and makes her pass for what is

called clever. With a great deal of vanity, and an affectation of tenderneſs, which covers the moſt termagant ſpirit that ever animated a female breaſt, her ruling and governing paſſion is avarice ; and yet, ſtrange to tell ! generoſity is of all things what ſhe profeſſes to admire, and is moſt ſtudious of having thought her characteriſtic. Her pretenſions to this virtue I have oppoſed to her vice of avarice, as the terms appropriated to each ſeem moſt contrary in their natures ; yet I do not mean by generoſity, that bounteous diſpoſition which is commonly underſtood by the word : no, no ; ſhe aimed at the reputation of this virtue in our more exalted idea of it, and would fain be thought a woman of a *great ſoul*. This phraſe was often in her mouth ; and though her whole conduct gave the lye to her profeſſions, ſhe would tell you fifty ſtories, without a word of truth in any of them, to prove how nobly ſhe had acted on ſuch and ſuch occaſions. On the knowledge of this part of her temper, I chiefly built my hopes of ſucceſs.

I kept up a ſort of forced converſation during the reſt of our journey. She was fullen, but not rude. As I was far from deſiring to come to an eclaiſciſſement with her, I did not wiſh to have her in better temper.

We reached the inn, which was about a mile

mile on our side Rochester, at eight o'clock in the morning. This was a favourable hour, as by that time every traveller must have left the stages they lay at. The house stood alone, and luckily enough had no company in it. My old servant, Lamb, had received my instructions by letter, and was prepared accordingly for our reception. This was the place to which I had ordered the maid to be carried; she had arrived there some time before us, and was safely lodged.

The chariot drove into the court-yard close to the door of the inn; the step was let down in an instant, and Mrs. Lamb appeared to receive us. We both darted into the house. Dressed as we were for a ball, we made an odd appearance as travellers at that hour in the morning. I believe this consideration made Mrs. Gerrarde very readily hurry up stairs with the woman of the house.

I enquired for Mrs. Gerrarde's maid, having given orders to Lamb that she should not be seen 'till I first spoke to her. I was carried into the room where she was: she seemed very glad that we were arrived. I desired her to lay out her lady's toilet, which I concluded she had brought with her; for that Mrs. Gerrarde would presently put herself in a proper habit for travelling. The maid told me she had brought her mistress's riding-dress with her, and as many other things of her wearing apparel as she could

conveniently carry. I saw a vast heap of things lying unpacked on a bed which was in the room, and asked her how she had managed so cleverly as to get such a number of things together without observation. She told me she had lost no time, from the minute I left her, 'till the arrival of her guide; but had employed the interval in carrying out some of the best of her lady's cloaths piece by piece, and conveying them to the cottage, which she could easily do without the servants seeing her; for as it was dark, she passed in and out without observation. Here she huddled them into a large port-manteau. After this she went to examine her lady's escrutoire; but was a long time puzzled in endeavouring to open it, as none of the keys I had given her answered. She endeavoured to force it open with as little noise as possible, but in vain. She then had recourse to a second trial of the keys, when one of them, which probably had been passed by before, luckily opened the lock; and she secured all the money and jewels she could find. These, said she, kept me in continual dread all the way as I travelled; for I have eight hundred pounds in bank notes; and though my lady has such a quantity of jewels on her, I am sure I have as many more about me, which I have hid in different parts of my cloaths.

I commended the girl's diligence, as indeed

deed it deserved ; and having before ordered tea and coffee into Mrs. Gerrarde's room, I now went in to breakfast with her. I found the woman of the house still with her, at which I was not at all uneasy ; for as she had been tutored by her husband, I knew she was not to be wrought upon, if Mrs. Gerrarde had attempted it.

As I did not at that time desire a *tête à tête* with her, I contrived to keep Mrs. Lamb in the room, by desiring her to drink tea with us.

When we had done breakfast, I told Mrs. Gerrarde, that as I feared she was a good deal fatigued, if it was agreeable to her, we would remain where we were for that day ; and that I would by all means have her think of taking some rest. She said she was extremely tired, and should like to get a little sleep. I think, madam, you had better go to bed, said Mrs. Lamb ; I have a very quiet chamber ready, where no noise in the house can disturb you. Shew me to it, answered Mrs. Gerrarde, with a tone of weariness and ill-humour. The woman obeyed ; I followed : she carried her to the door of the room where the maid was and throwing it open, Mrs. Gerrarde, who supposed she was attending her, went in : I stepped in after her ; Mrs. Lamb withdrew.

Mrs. Gerrarde's astonishment at the sight of her maid, is past description. Rachael ! in a tone of admiration. Rachael, who did

not think there was any thing unexpected or extraordinary in their meeting, quite at a loss to guess at what her mistress wondered, answered in her turn with some surprize, Madam! and waited, expecting she would give her some orders; which finding the lady did not, the maid asked her very composedly, would she please to undress? I hope, madam, said I, stepping forward, that Mrs. Rachael has taken care to bring you every thing you may have occasion for; I shall leave you in her hands, and wish you a good repose. Strange, astonishing creature! said Mrs. Gerrarde, looking at me with less anger than surprize. I bowed, and left the room.

I ordered Mrs. Lamb to have an eye to my prisoners; and heartily tired as I was, between dancing and travelling, I undressed, and threw myself into bed. I slept 'till six o'clock in the evening; then rose, and put myself into a habit fitter for my journey than that in which I came; and which I had sent in a post-trunk before me, by the messenger whom I had employed to apprize Lamb of my coming.

Mrs. Gerrarde was not yet stirring. I called for Rachael, and asked her how she had come off with her lady, upon telling her the manner of her falling into my snare. Rachael told me her lady wondered mightily at my art, and said I was the *strangest gentleman* that ever was born. My friend Rachael

chael softened the expression I fancy ; I am sure Mrs. Gerrarde did not call me a strange *gentleman*. She said her mistress smiled two or three times at her relation, particularly at my giving her the keys. I found, upon the whole, that my conduct in securing her her money and her jewels, together with the attendance of her maid, had a good deal appeased her resentment.

Mrs. Gerrarde did not rise 'till near eight o'clock. I had ordered as elegant a dinner as the house could afford ; and the lady having put herself into a genteel dishabille, with great alacrity sat down to table, and did not appear to have fretted away her appetite. I would suffer no one to attend but Rachael. I told Mrs. Gerrarde that I proposed setting out for Dover that night, and that as it could not be supposed her maid should be able to ride so far, and that a second carriage with four horses (as less might not be able to keep pace with us) would be liable to observation, I would, if she pleased, resign my place in the chariot to Mrs. Rachael, and attend her myself on horseback. She answered me coldly, Since she *must* go, it was indifferent to her who was to be her companion. Though the motive I offered for this manner of travelling was not without its weight, yet my true reason was to avoid being boxed up so long again with Mrs. Gerrarde. My time was not yet come for ex-

planations, and I was afraid of being upon good terms with her too soon.

The remainder of the evening was spent by her and her maid in carefully packing up their baggage, which had been brought in a confused huddle to the inn. Mrs. Gerrarde had a convenient trunk bought at Rochester for the purpose, and assisted herself in laying them up safely.

She equipped herself in a smart riding-dress, and at eleven o'clock, without any great reluctance, permitted me to put her and her maid into the chariot. The inn had no company in it, at least that we saw; and our host was too discreet to let any of his servants be in the way. I mounted my horse, and triumphantly galloped off with my prize.

We reached Dover early next morning, and immediately got on board the packet. The lady by this time appeared so perfectly serene, that I believe in my soul I should not have got rid of her, if I had desired her to have gone back again; but she had assumed a new air, and affected a fine tender melancholy in her countenance. I guessed at her thoughts, and found afterwards my conjecture right. Will you believe me, Sir George, when I tell you the baggage had formed serious *honourable* designs upon my person? Fact, upon my word. I saw it presently (you know my knack of reading people's
minds

minds in their faces), and was not sorry for the discovery ; for though I determined not on any account to encourage such a wild expectation, yet I intended to make a *discreet* use of it ; besides, I knew it would afford me a handle for keeping a *respectful* distance.

We landed next evening. She had been very sick at sea, and continued so much out of order, that she was put to bed as soon as we got to the inn. She ordered her maid not to stir from her ; the very thing I wished ; so that I had nothing to do but to be very troublesome in my enquiries after her health, and very sorry for her indisposition.

The next morning however set all to rights ; and after congratulating her on her recovery, and the revival of her beauty, I told her I meant to carry her to Boulogne, whither I had sent Pivet the night before to take lodgings for us, in a private house which he knew. I found that neither Mrs. Gerrarde nor her maid spoke French ; a circumstance I was very glad of, though the former bitterly lamented her having *forgot* it. She made not the least objection to the travelling from Calais to Boulogne, as she had done before ; her late indisposition gave me a pretence for insisting on Rachael's attending her in the chariot.

The lodgings Pivet had taken were very handsome ; our apartments were on the

same floor, separated only by a lobby. Mrs. Rachael had a little bed fitted up for her by my directions in her lady's dressing-room. Thus far I had failed before the wind; but now came the difficult part of my task. It was impossible for Mrs. Gerraide to conceive that any thing, but down-right love for her person, could have induced me to do what I had done. I had actually run away with her, put myself to some hazard, and, what in her estimation was no small matter, some expence too. No other motive had appeared in all my conduct towards her; and tho' I had not absolutely made love to her, yet what other construction could my actions bear? for my words, to say the truth, were equivocal. She must necessarily have concluded that I had no other view but a piece of gallantry with her. Her designs on me were of a much more serious nature; and her vanity made her imagine, that, notwithstanding my thorough knowledge of her character, her cunning, joined to my passion, might lead me into her snare.

Now, I had two nice points to consider of, and two difficulties to surmount. The first was, not, by any part of my conduct, to carry the deception so far, as to give her the least room to hope I could be mad enough to marry her. This, bad as *she* is, and extravagant as *I* am, I could not think of doing, even to gain my favourite point. The other was, to keep up such
an

an appearance of gallantry towards her as she must naturally expect, and at the same time avoid all approaches which usually forerun the catastrophe of an amour; than which nothing was more repugnant to my wishes.

To steer between these two extremes was the difficult task, particularly the latter; for, between ourselves, I began to be much more afraid of her than she was of me. I knew it would be impossible for me to keep up the farce long; the sooner it was over the better; and therefore I determined to enter on my part directly.

I had been ruminating on my project all the way as I rode. When we arrived at Boulogne, I found myself a little out of order, having caught cold; and as I was really somewhat feverish, a thought started into my head, that this illness might aid me in my design. When we came to our lodgings, I made my excuses to Mrs. Gerrarde for not being able to attend her: I told her I found myself ill, and must be obliged to go to bed. She said she was *very* sorry, and perhaps she spoke truth.

I left her in possession of her new apartment with her maid Rachael. Their being strangers to the language of the country cut off all communication with the people of the house, who could not speak English. I introduced Pivet to them, whom they had never seen before (for he had taken particu-

ticular care to keep out of their view during the whole journey), as a gentleman who was to be their interpreter; and having thus settled my household, I retired to my bed-chamber.

Not well, nor sick enough to go to bed, I threw myself however down on it; and after revolving in my mind all the occurrences of the three or four past days, I started up again, sat down to my desk, and have given you, my Bidulph, a faithful narrative of my proceedings down to the present period of time, being Nov. 20, eight o'clock in the evening.

You may soon expect to have the second part of this my delectable history; 'Shewing how Orlando, not being able to prevail, with all his eloquence, on the as fair and beautiful, as fierce and inexorable, Princess Gerrardina, to put the finishing hand to his adventures and most wonderful exploits, did, his wrath being moved thereby, like an ungentle knight, bury his sword in her snow-white, but savage and unrelenting breast; whereat, being stung with remorse, he afterwards kills himself.'

Would not this be a pretty conclusion of my adventures? No, no, Sir George, expect better things from thy friend. I hope my knight-errantry will not end so tragically. But hasten to make my peace with that gracious creature your sister: yet why do I
name

name her and myself in the same sentence? She cares not for me, thinks not of me, or, if she does, it is with contempt. I said this before, and I *must* repeat it again; but tell her, what I have done was with a view to promote her happiness. Oh! may *she* be happy, whatever becomes of me. I know the means I have used will make her angry; but try to make her forgive the means for the motive's sake. Tell her as much of this wild story as you think proper; but do not let her see it in my wild rambling language; that is only fit for your own eye.

Your mother, I know, is out of all patience with me. I am black enough in her opinion already. This last action, as far as she has yet known of it, will dye me ten shades deeper; but pray put in a word for me there too. I know she will say, that 'we are not to return evil for evil; and that it is not lawful to do evil, though to bring forth good.' But put her in mind that there are such things as *pious frauds* (though, by-the-bye, I do not take this of mine to be one of them); 'that wicked people are to have their arts opposed by arts; and that good people have not only been permitted, but commanded to execute vengeance on sinners.' And you may hint at the children of Israel's being ordered to spoil the Egyptians, tho' far be it from me to spoil Mrs. Gerrarde of any thing she has. This however, and as many wise sayings as you can collect for the
pur-

purpose, you may string together ; and be sure you tell her I have hopes of reclaiming Mrs. Gerrarde from her *evil* courses, and do not despair of prevailing on her to go into a nunnery ; for Mrs. Gerrarde, you must know, was bred a Roman Catholic, though she conformed on marrying Captain Gerrarde.

Now put all this into decent language, fit for that very good woman's ears ; for *good* I must call her, notwithstanding she was inexorable to me.

I am fatigued with writing so long a letter — I feel my disorder increase upon me ; I will be let blood, and hope soon to give you a good account of my undertaking. Mean while, if I am not quite reprobated, write me a line, directed under cover to Monsieur Larou, at the Post-house, Boulogne. Farewell, my dear Bidulph ; sick or well, I am ever your's, O. F.

December 7. — Was there ever such a piece of knight-errantry ? What a mad-cap is this ! Pray, my dear, are you not astonished at him ? I am sure I am. I had not an opportunity to finish the copying of this very long letter, which I began yesterday morning, 'till very late this night. My poor mother has been so restless, and so much out of order, these two days, I desired her leave to read to her Mr. Faulkland's history (for I can call it by no other name) as I sat by her bed side. She told me, I might

might let her know the substance of what he said, as it would fatigue her too much to attend to so long an epistle.

You would have smiled, my Cecilia, at my good parent's amazement, when I told her Mr. Faulkland's proceedings, and his reasons for them. She would scarce give credit to it at first, and I was obliged to repeat several circumstances to her over again. And so, said she, this was all on *your* account, and he had *really* no ill design on Mrs. Gerrarde. I am glad of this for miss Burchell's sake, and shall be impatient to tell her of it. I begged of my mother to wait a while for the result of Mr. Faulkland's adventure, before she mentioned any thing of the matter to miss Burchell. We do not yet know, said I, how this matter may turn out; Mr. Faulkland, to be sure, will make haste to communicate to my brother the issue of this odd affair, and it will then be time enough to inform the young lady.

My mother unwillingly consented to postpone a discovery which he knew would be so agreeable to miss Burchell. I applaud her humanity; but think that, good and prudent as she is, she is too unreserved in her confidences. This strange business is, I think, at present in too critical a suspense to trust the knowledge of it to any body. If Mr. Faulkland fails in his design, his avowal of it will be far from serving me. Sir George was with us for a few minutes

to-

to-day, only to exult in Mr. Faulkland's recovered credit. Has he not well explained himself, said he? Oh! I knew there must have been some mystery at the bottom of that conduct which surprized us all so much. *There's a man for you!* Shew me another who would carry his noble disinterested love to such lengths!

My mother did not like that he should run on in that strain, and therefore stopped him. The end crowns all, Sir George: let us see how your friend will conduct himself *through* this ticklish affair. Let him get through it how he will, answered my brother a little bluntly, I think Sidney has obligations to him she ought never to forget.

December 16. ——— More intelligence, my dear; stranger and stranger still! I am sorry I sent off my last packet, as I am sure you must be impatient for the conclusion of Mr. Faulkland's adventure; and then what sorry stuff has the interval been filled up with! but I will now make you amends. My mother is better too, thank God! and every thing promises well.

Sir George has had a second packet from Boulogne. Take the continuation of Mrs. Gerrarde's history as follows:

How rude is the hand of sickness, my Bidulph! it had like to have spoiled one of the best projects that ever was undertaken, and consigned to oblivion an action worthy of immortality. I have been very ill since

I last

I last wrote to you; the disorder, which I then complained of, turned out to be an ugly fever; and I was for three days in extreme danger. Mrs. Gerrarde was, during that time, closely attended by Pivet, whose services I dispensed with on that account. He told me she appeared uneasy at my situation, and enquired constantly, and *kindly* too, after my health. When I grew well enough to sit up, I begged the favour of seeing her in my chamber. She came very readily, and seemed downright anxious for my recovery. I told her I hoped she had been treated with proper care and respect during my sickness. She said Mr. Pivet was a very obliging, good-natured man, and had endeavoured to make her confinement as easy to her as possible.

The plan she had formed of turning to the most lasting advantage the inclination she supposed I had for her, inclined her to assume a very different behaviour from what was natural to her. The weakness of my condition, while it afforded me a pretence for a more cold and languid behaviour, than I could with any colour have put on at another time, gave her an opportunity of playing off her arts, and facilitated my design beyond my hopes.

She was seated at my bed-side: our first conversation consisted of nothing but complaints on my side, and condolences on her's.

her's. I sighed several times, and she sighed in return. Mrs. Gerrarde, said I, you are afflicted; but my illness has no share in your concern. Something else oppresses you; you regret the being separated from Mr. Arnold, and I am always the object of your hatred. Neither one nor t'other, answered she, in a kind voice. 'Tis impossible to hate you; you know it is not in nature for a woman to hate such a man as Mr. Faulkland. As for Mr. Arnold, though I own my former weakness in regard to him, yet I hope I have something to plead in my excuse. I was married very early to an old man, and had never experienced the happiness of reciprocal love: he died, and left me destitute. Mr. Arnold's generous, though I must confess unwarrantable passion, rescued me from distress. I did not know he was married when I first unwarily accepted of his addresses, and it was too late to retreat before I found it out; otherwise the universe should not have tempted me to have listened to him.

In the midst of the affluence I obtained from him, it often grieved me to think of the injury I did his wife. There is nothing, Mr. Faulkland so grating to a generous mind, and I think I may venture to assert that mine is one, as to live in a state of dependence, and, at the same time, owe that very dependence to a vice that you disdain.

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I was delighted to find that she had got into this strain; it was the thing I wished, but durst hardly hope for without abundance of trouble on my part, and a dissimulation that was irksome to me. I knew she had studied this speech, and got it by rote to answer her own purpose; but in this, as is generally the case of designing people, she overshot herself, and became the dupe to her own artifice. I laid hold of the cue she gave: Oh! madam, you charm me! go on, go on; now indeed you shew a generous mind: happy would it be for all your sex, after having deviated from the paths of virtue, if they could return to them with so good a grace, so just a sense of their errors! To *you*, Sir, said she, with a solemn air, I am indebted for my present resolutions: I hope from this time forward that my life will be irreproachable. I hope so too, madam. I guessed she understood these words as favouring her design: it was not meet to undeceive her (a little mental reservation, you know, Bidulph): she went on, little thinking she was forwarding *my* plan, when she only meant to promote her *own*. I hope Mr. Arnold will be as sensible of *his* fault as I am of *mine*, and that he will never fall into the like indiscretion again. I believe there can be no true happiness but between a *married* pair, who sincerely love each other.

Good!

Good ! good ! thought I ; sure my better genius prompts the woman to speak thus. Ah ! Mrs. Gerrarde, how exactly do your thoughts correspond with mine ! How just are all your sentiments ! What a true relish have you for virtue ! Yes, I hope with you that Mr. Arnold will be able to tread in your steps : it is a pity he has not your noble example before him. Mrs. Arnold is a good woman, and he might still live with her in tolerable contentment, if he can get the better of his irregular passion for you. What a noble triumph of virtuous resolution would this be, if you yourself were the instrument to bring this about. For Mrs. Arnold's and her brother's sake, as well as your own, I wish this were feasible.

I would do any thing in my power, said she (thinking she obliged me by the declaration) ; but I know not by what means such an event can be brought to pass.

I was afraid to urge the matter farther : I was within an hair's breadth of gaining my point, but did not think it prudent to press too forward. We'll think of it another time, said I, and groaned heavily, as if my spirits were fatigued with talking. She took the hint. I am afraid I have tired you ; you have talked too much. I answered her faintly, You are very good ! She curtsied to me, and retired with a majestic step. I saw her no more that day : she had got upon stilts,

stilt, and it was not yet time to take her down. To-morrow may produce a wonder : I will wait for it. I am really weak, but begin to recover my spirits.

Boulogne, Dec. 6.

Nothing is so conducive to the body's health, as the mind's being at ease. I have proved the truth of this observation : my soul had been racked with suspense and uncertainty during my illness ; the uneasy state of my mind increased my disorder ; the disorder itself had chiefly given rise to my apprehensions, as pain and sickness are naturally accompanied with a gloominess of thought. Thus the cause and its effects were united in mutual league against me, and reciprocally assisted each other to plague and torment me.

My fears were entirely on Mrs. Arnold's account. What, thought I, would be the consequence of my project, in case of my death ? Mrs. Gerrarde will return back to England ; and, upon telling her story, will be received again by Arnold ; their union perhaps established as firmly as before, and poor Mrs. Arnold's hopes ruined for ever. Then I thought what a wretch I must appear in her eyes, doubtful, may be, of my sincerity as to the motives I urged to you for my conduct. On the other hand, if these motives should by any means happen to be suspected by Mrs. Gerrarde, it might be the means

means of producing the direct contrary effect from what I intended ; and instead of banishing Arnold's cruel suspicions of his lady, only serve to strengthen them ; for I knew Mrs. Gerrarde would leave nothing unsaid or undone for this horrid purpose ; and it is not every one, Sir George, whose hearts are enlarged enough to suppose a man may now and then take a little pains from disinterested principles. This last suggestion of my thoughts made me almost mad, and actually brought on a delirium ; and what may seem a paradox, though it is literally true, the total deprivation of my senses for two days was the means of my recovering them afterwards ; for I am sure, had I retained enough of them to have ruminated longer on this fatal supposition, and my disorder had still threatened me with death, I should have run mad. The care of a skilful physician recalled me from the precincts of the grave ; the strength of a constitution, naturally good, joined to all the resolution I could muster, did the rest.

The first use I made of my recovered reason, was to consult with myself in what manner, or by what means, I should prevail on Mrs. Gerrarde to lend a helping hand to my design. Her leaving Arnold to go off with me, and to all human appearance with her own consent, was a material point gained ; but the most important of all, and without which every

every thing else would be fruitless, was to get her to acknowledge, under her own hand, the injury she had done Mrs. Arnold by her vile insinuations to her husband. This was the grand object of all my wishes. This, you will say, was difficult : I confess it did then appear so to me. I had not at first weighed all the consequences of my enterprise with that deliberation that I ought. The principal object I had in view, was the separating Mrs. Gerrarde and Mr. Arnold, and raising his indignation against her, on account of the apparent infidelity on her side. To say the truth, I had not considered what I was to do with her when I had her. Two things I had resolved on ; the one was, not to let her return to England ; the other, to provide for her in whatever way she would put it in my power (the devoting myself to her excepted), in such a manner as should leave her no room to reproach me with having injured her temporal welfare.

During my illness, I had revolved all these things in my mind ; the last, viz. the providing for Mrs. Gerrarde, was not a matter in which I expected to meet many difficulties ; the other appeared very formidable. Several methods presented themselves, but none of them pleased me, and I rejected them one after the other ; and, to tell you my mind honestly, I was almost
resolved

resolved on using compulsion, and frightening the poor woman into compliance ; for I preferred even this to artificial dealings. I had already used more than I could have possibly brought myself to on any other occasion in the world ; and I think I should have threatened her with a nunnery, the bastile, or even an inquisition, sooner than have failed, if she herself had not beyond expectation, beyond hope, almost beyond the evidence of my senses, led me as it were to request the thing of her, which of all others I most despaired of her consenting to, or even hearing proposed with patience. And yet, notwithstanding the seeming strangeness of this, it was nothing but what was very natural, and most consonant to her own designs. Blinded, and, as I may say, infatuated by vanity, she imagined, that as I had taken such uncommon pains to obtain her, I must love her with an uncommon degree of passion ; and that her steadily refusing any dishonourable proposals might induce me, rather than lose her, to make her my wife.

In order to prepare me the better for this, no means were more natural, than for her to assume the air of a penitent, to seem sorry and ashamed of her past sins, and resolve on a virtuous course for the future. At the worst, that is, if she found I was not disposed to be as virtuous as herself, she
knew

knew she might play an after-game; and could easily relax by degrees from the severity of her chastity, accordingly as I made it worth her while.

This was the master-key to her behaviour, and once I had got it, which I soon did, it was easy to unlock her breast.

She came into my room the next morning without an invitation, and only the previous ceremony of sending Rachael to enquire how I did, and to tell me, if I were well enough to *rise* (observe her nicety), she would sit half an hour with me. I had enjoyed such tranquility of heart since my last conference with her, and had rested so well the preceding night, that I found myself quite another thing from what I was the day before; and, excepting a little weakness, I was as well as ever I was in my life. I was up and dressed, and you may be sure sent a suitable answer to her kind message, which soon brought the lady, sailing with an imperial port, into my chamber. After some civilities past on both sides, she, by way of bringing her own interests on the tapis, reassumed the topic of our yesterday's conversation.

You don't imagine Mr. Faulkland, said she, how easy I am in my mind, since I have reconciled myself to the loss of Mr. Arnold. I own I had a regard for him; but I think it had more of gratitude than

love in it; for though he is an agreeable man, to say the truth, he never was quite to my taste: he had always something too formal about him.

I took the liberty to ask her, how she first came acquainted with Mr. Arnold; and, as you may not know it, I will give you the story. She answered, with a profound sigh, It was by mere accident I first saw him. After the death of Captain Gerrarde, which happened in a little more than a year after we left Bath, for the gout, poor man, got into his stomach not long after we returned home (and the crocodile pretended to drop a tear), I went to London, in order to solicit for my pension. As I had formerly been a Roman Catholic, and had not publickly renounced that persuasion, some difficulties arose in the business; and a friend of my deceased husband, who had undertaken the affair for me, happening to be an intimate of Mr. Arnold's, and knowing he had an influence with the secretary at war, endeavoured to interest him in my favour, by representing my situation in the most affecting light he could to him. He kindly undertook to interfere for me, and was as good as his word; but could not surmount the difficulty of the objection which was made to my claim. He happened one morning, unluckily for me, to call in at my friend's lodgings, to tell him of his

his ill success : I, impatient to know how my affair went on, had dropped in to enquire about it a few minutes before him, and was sitting in the dining-room when Mr. Arnold entered. I was in my weeds, and my melancholy looks, I believe, made Mr. Arnold conjecture I was the person for whom he had so kindly concerned himself. He told my friend he was sorry to inform him, that though he had used all means in his power, with regard to the affair in which he had employed him, he found it was impossible to effect the business ; and I am the more concerned, said he, turning towards me, as I am afraid this lady is to be the sufferer. My relation said I was the person for whom he had been so good as to intercede. I returned Mr. Arnold thanks not without tears at the uncomfortable prospect I had before me ; for I had then nothing to depend on but my small jointure in Kent. I was about to take my leave ; but observing it rained, desired my friend to give his servant leave to call me a chair. Mr. Arnold very politely desired I would permit him to set me down, as his chariot waited at the door. I would have excused myself ; but my relation said, 'Tis in his way, child ; and since you have no hopes of a pension, you ought to be sparing of chair-hire. Mr. Arnold very obligingly offered me his hand, and led me to his chariot. He set me down

at my lodgings, and at parting desired permission to wait on me. The fatal consequence of our acquaintance it was impossible for me to foresee ; for I never had the least hint given me, either from my own relation or Mr. Arnold himself, that he was a married man, 'till he had so far secured my gratitude, by repeated acts of generosity, that it was impossible for me to refuse him the return he demanded.

Too-grateful heart, said I (pretending to believe her cant,) what a pity thou wert not destined to reward a purer love ! But I thought, madam, you really had enjoyed a pension.

It was not necessary, she answered, that I should let the world suppose otherwise. I was not at all known when I first came to town. Mr. Arnold's excessive profuseness (quite against my inclination), threw me into a more expensive way of living than before. I found myself obliged to account for it, to the few acquaintance I had, by all the probable means I could devise. For this purpose, I pretended that I had not only obtained a pension, but had also a fortune left me by the death of a relation. This was believed, as no-body troubled their heads to enquire whether it was true or not.

Mr. Arnold was passionately fond of the country, and always passed his summers there ; but as he could not think of parting with

with me, he was sadly at a loss how to have me near him, without bringing on us both the observation of an inquisitive neighbourhood (such as all country places abound in) if I went down, quite a stranger as I was, into Essex; particularly as he told me there were two families near Arnold-abbey, who made it their business to pry into other people's affairs. These were, a Lady Grimston, a censorious old woman, and the parson of the parish, who was a mighty strict man, of whom Mr. Arnold seemed to stand in some awe. He therefore determined against my going into that part of the world: but having casually heard me speak of my little cottage in Kent, where poor Captain Gerrarde and I had lived for two or three years, he asked me whereabouts it was, and was delighted to find it joined his own estate at South-Park, and was within a mile of his house. He begged of me to go down to my own house, which he insisted on furnishing elegantly for me, and obliged me also to keep a chariot. I (tho' unwillingly) found myself under a necessity of complying. About a fortnight after I was settled at Ashby, Mr. Arnold and his family came down: then it was, for the first time, I saw his lady. I went to pay my compliments to her, as every genteel family in the neighbourhood did; and I own I never saw her without feeling myself shocked to death at the thoughts of

the injury I did her; for I really believe Mrs. Arnold is a very well meaning woman.

Oh! thou scorpion, muttered I to myself, and yet thou hast pursued her to affliction and ruin!

That Mrs. Arnold is a well-meaning woman, said I coldly, I have no doubt; yet you see Mr. Arnold's opinion of her virtue was not strong enough to be proof against suspicions; for it is most certain, that if he had not given credit to your representations of his wife's conduct, he would not have gone such lengths as to have parted with her, for Arnold had always some regard to appearances.

My representations, Sir! with a look of astonishment; pray do not lay more to my charge than I deserve: what the particular reasons were, which induced Mr. Arnold to part with his wife, I will not say; but whatever his suspicions were, they never took their rise from me.

I found she intended to brazen this denial out; but as it was absolutely necessary to my design to bring her to a confession of this particular act of perfidy, I resolved to lead her into it in such a way as should be least mortifying to her pride.

Come, come, my dear Mrs. Gerrarde, said I, I know you are above concealing any past failings that you are resolved to mend. I know very well that it was *your* insinuations, and *your's* only, that kindled the fire of jealousy

jealousy in Arnold's breast. Such arts are not uncommon in lovers. You loved him then, and wished to have him entirely to yourself; and a wife, though a forsaken one, is still intitled to so much attention from her husband, as a fond mistress may think robs her of too much. I know this was the case, and it is natural: but were you not an unmerciful little tyrant to involve *me* in the mischief, and put it into the man's noddle, that *I* had designs upon his wife?

The easy manner in which I affected to speak of this affair, seemed to reconcile her a little to the charge; but the last part of it, which regarded myself, struck her all of a heap. She had no notion that I knew it. She was going to speak, to deny the accusation, I suppose, and therefore I prevented her; and taking her by the hand, Come now, said I, deal with me ingenuously; and if you would persuade me that you are really in earnest, and mean to repair those little lapses which you have inconsiderately been led into, tell me truly, did you really believe that I ever had any thoughts of an amour with Mrs. Arnold.

I chose to give my enquiry this turn, that she might, with less shame to herself, by laying hold on the hint, acknowledge her guilt. She hesitated for an answer, and I guessed she was considering whether to persist in denying the whole charge against her,

or avail herself of the handle I had given her, and make a sort of merit of her sincerity, by pretending to believe what she was thoroughly convinced there was not the least foundation even to suspect, but what her own wicked suggestions had encouraged in the unfortunate Arnold. Her silence, thus rightly interpreted by me, made me go on: You see I know all your secrets; and you are not the woman I take you for, if you conceal your real sentiments in this particular: more of my quiet depends on it than you are aware of, and I withdrew my hand from her's with a serious and almost resenting air.

She appeared disturbed, and in a good deal of confusion; but recovering herself, Why really, Mr. Faulkland, I can't say but I *had* some suspicion of what you mention. I was no stranger to your fondness for Mrs. Arnold before she was married, and there was nothing very surprising in a disappointed lover's renewing his hopes, when he thought the neglect which a lady met with from her husband, might incline her to be less obdurate to a man she was once known to favour so much.

This was enough: I did not think it by any means necessary to press her to a farther explanation; what she said was a sufficient acknowledgement of her fault, though the cunning sorceress had turned the hint (which I had indeed thrown out on purpose) to her own advantage: and had the effrontery to
avow

avow an opinion which had never before entered into her imagination.

I found it necessary now to carry on the farce, by assuring her, I had never entertained a thought to Mrs. Arnold's dishonour; and that though I made no great scruple of robbing a man of his mistress, yet I thought it a crime of the blackest dye to deprive him of the affection or fidelity of his wife.

The serious manner in which I spoke this, a little disconcerted Mrs. Gerrarde. Well said she, I can only say, that I am very sorry I entertained so false a suspicion; and more so, as it has produced such unhappy consequences: but I hope Mr. Faulkland will not believe that I meant *him* any injury.

That I am sure you did not, said I; and yet this very affair has given me more uneasiness than you can imagine; for as Mrs. Arnold's brother is my most particular friend, he must think me the greatest of villains, if I could entertain a thought of dishonouring his family: the fear of losing his friendship, I own, gives me more pain than I can express, and there is nothing I would not do to exculpate myself to him.

I am very unfortunate, cried Mrs. Gerrarde (pretending to wipe her eyes), to have been the occasion of so much uneasiness in anybody's family. I wish I had died before I was so unhappy as to meet with Mr. Ar-

nold : if it had not been for him, I might now have been an innocent and a contented woman ; and she *really* squeezed out a tear, though not of contrition.

Dear madam (again taking her hand), do not afflict yourself for what is past recalling ; contentment, nay happiness, I hope, is yet within your reach ; it will be your own fault if you do not lay hold of it : as for the unhappy family that *I*, as well as *you*, have contributed to distress, I wish from my heart there could be a re-union amongst them. Mr. Arnold's having lost you might perhaps incline him to turn his thoughts towards his wife, if he were not prejudiced against her by the suspicions he has entertained of her virtue. This I am afraid will be an insuperable bar to their ever living together, unless your influence, which first gave birth to his jealousy, is still forcible enough to remove it.

I wish it were in my power, said Mrs. Gerrarde ; there is nothing I would not do to effect it : but what influence can I have on Mr. Arnold, after what has happened ?

Suppose you were to write to him, said I : you and he probably may never meet again ; and it would be an effort worthy indeed of a noble mind, to repair the wrongs we have done to others, by a candid acknowledgement of our own faults. Putting Mrs. Arnold out of the question, 'tis a reparation
you

you owe *my* character ; for however light the world may make of a piece of gallantry with a married woman, it is a matter of serious moment to me to acquit myself of the supposed crime to Sir George Bidulph.

If you think, said she, that my writing to Mr. Arnold could produce such good effects, I am ready to do it ; though I confess I hardly know how to address him ; for he must, to be sure, look upon me as the very reverse of what I *really* am, and thinks me without dispute an ungrateful woman.

We can but try, said I : if it does not produce the desired effect, it will not be your fault ; and you will have the satisfaction to reflect that you have done your duty. I stepped to my escrutoire while I was speaking ; and resolving not to give her time to cool, took out pen, ink, and paper, and laid them on a little writing-table before her. If this unlucky breach, said I, were once made up, my mind would then be easy.

She took the pen in her hand, but seemed irresolute, and at a loss how to begin. Come, madam, said I, and confute by your own example, the received erroneous opinion, that if a woman once strays from the paths of virtue, she never returns to them.

A false and ill grounded opinion indeed, said she, lifting up her profane eyes as in penitence. What am I to say ?

[You are to observe, that my notes, as she

she went along while I dictated, are put between hooks.]

[Begin] ‘ Dear Sir’ [for I would be neither too familiar nor too cold], ‘ The terms
‘ on which you and I have lived, intitle you
‘ to an explanation of my reasons for leaving
‘ you so abruptly ; and I hope the generosity
‘ of my motive, will incline you to overlook the seeming unkindness of the action.’
[This you may assure yourself it will, when he comes to consider coolly]. ‘ The unhappiness that I occasioned in your family, by
‘ causing the separation of you and your
‘ wife, has, for a long time, been a thorn in
‘ my heart ; and the more so, as besides the
‘ robbing her of your affections, I own,
‘ and take shame to myself in the confession’
[how noble must he think this confession!],
‘ that those aspersions, which I threw on her,
‘ had not the least foundation in truth.’
[This is truly great]. ‘ I always believed
‘ her perfectly innocent ; but if I could have
‘ had the least possible doubt of it before, I
‘ must be now confirmed in that opinion by
‘ Mr. Faulkland, who can have no reason
‘ for excusing or concealing facts of this nature from me at present’. [Here she added of herself, repeating it first aloud to to me.] ‘ and I think the preference he has
‘ given me to her, now in her state of separation, is a convincing proof of this.’
[An admirable argument] (her vanity would not

not let her slip this observation). [Proceed madam]. ‘The true reasons of my
‘insinuations against her, were no other than
‘that I could not bear to share your affecti-
‘ons with any-body’ [and a very sufficient
reason too, which a man that loves can easily
forgive]. ‘I knew, that so long as she gave
‘you no cause of complaint, you were too
‘just to withdraw your whole heart from
‘her, and nothing *but* the whole would con-
‘tent me.’ [Still you see you shew a great
mind]. True, said she, going on; but my
reason for leaving him without apprizing him
of it, what are we to say for that? [Oh! no-
thing more *easy* to execute: he will admire
you the more for the reason *I* shall give.
Come]. ‘My departing without first make-
‘ing you acquainted with my design, and
‘going off with another person, may, at
‘first sight, seem very strange; but, to tell
‘you the real state of my heart, I found I
‘could not trust to its firmness on the sub-
‘ject of parting with you. I loved you so,
‘that it was with pain and grief I made the
‘resolution; and I knew too well, that had
‘you used any arguments, which to be sure
‘you would have done, to dissuade me, I,
‘like an easy fool, would have given up all
‘my good designs.’ [I am only afraid this
will make him love you more than ever.]
(She smiled as she continued to write.) ‘As
‘for the other article’—(This I was more
puzzled

puzzled to excuse than the first; but putting on a bold face, I said, madam, I hope you will not condemn me here, while you excuse yourself: the saying you were *run away* with, will knock all the rest on the head, and he may chuse whether he will believe that you really intended to break off with him or not; therefore that particular had better not be touched upon. Well, said she, get me out of this scrape as cleverly as you brought me into it. Fear not said I; (go on). ‘As for the other article, though I shall never love Mr. Faulkland as I have done you, yet in him I have found a protector; and through his means, I hope to pass the remainder of my life, in a manner more suitable to a woman of a generous way of thinking, than that wherein she considered herself as encroaching on the rights of another. I hope, by this sacrifice which I have made of my love to a more heroic principle, that I shall expiate my former offence; and that you will follow my example so far as to make what reparation you can to the woman we have both injured.’ [How this must raise, how exalt you in his opinion! I think it must, cried she, bridling up her head, as if they were really her own sentiments.]

I believe, said I, this is all that is necessary to be said: you may add, in a postscript, that, as he furnished the house for
you.

you at Ashby, every thing in it is at his service ; together with your chariot and horses, which were also his gifts.

She demurred to this ; and in the midst of her heroics, said, I wish I could get somebody to sell them for me privately, and remit the money to me ; for, since I *am* here, I should like to see a little more of France, before I return.

I told her that would look mean, and below a *great mind*. Well, said she, let them go. I owe all my servants a year's wages, and another person about fifty pounds for a little temple he had just built in my garden, but not quite finished when I came away. I think I had better desire those debts to be discharged : I have always been very punctual in my dealings, and would not for the world *wrong* any-body.

You are in the right, said I : it will look honourable in you to desire those debts to be paid.

She now proceeded to conclude her letter in the same stile she had begun it, and added a postscript to the purport I mentioned. I hastened to make her seal it up, and direct it to Mr. Arnold at his house in London, who, I suppose, has had the pleasure of receiving it before now ; for I dispatched it off directly. I flatter myself with the hope that it will have the desired effect on him.

You

You will think perhaps, that, as I have managed it, I have really given her a sort of merit with him in the acknowledgement of her fault, and the pretended reason she gives for leaving him. No such thing, Sir George. Arnold is a man of too much sense, and knows the world too well, to be so deceived. I have been told by my lord V——, who knows him perfectly, that no-body judges better when he is not blinded by his passions. All her professions must go for nothing when *facts* are against her. It is plain she went off with another man, and to all appearances premeditatedly, as her maid and her riches bore her company. 'Tis also plain, by her own confession, that this man stands well with her. As for her recanting her injurious aspersions on poor Mrs. Arnold, 'tis the only circumstances in her letter likely to gain belief, as she could have no temptation to that but real compunction, with which people of that kind are sometimes visited; and for the rest of her letter, to any one of common understanding, that lays circumstances together, it will appear, as I intended it should, the contrivance of an artful jilt, who having almost ruined the wretch she has had in her power, would afterwards make a *merit* of deserting him; for they must be hardened reprobates indeed, that would not, if they could, at least try to palliate their evil deeds. This is the light I expect Arnold will
consider

consider her in. I know he is hurt deeply in his fortune by this vile harpy. I hope the remnant may be sufficient to support your excellent sister, if not in affluence, at least with comfort, should she regain her influence over him, and submit to live with him again.

This I am sure, will be the consequence, if he is not blind to his own happiness.

I shall be impatient to know how the letter operates on him ; but this you are not likely to be let into ; and perhaps his pride may make him endeavour to conceal it from every-body. My lord V—, I am sure, will pick up some intelligence, and send it to me.

I think Mrs. Gerrarde's confession, in regard to Mrs. Arnold (to which she could have no interested motive), with the corroborating circumstance of *my* going off with her at a time when Mrs. Arnold was from under her husband's protection, injured by him in the tenderest point, and aspersed by a barbarous and invidious world ; all this, I say, must surely clear from all suspicion that admirable creature : for who, that knows Mrs. Arnold, would think that any man (except her husband) would prefer any woman upon earth to her ? If this does not remove all doubt of her conduct in Arnold, as well as in the rest of the world, my pains have been to little purpose ; and I know no other human means that can be used to disabuse the mad credulity of that man. I pity him from my
heart

heart in his present situation ; for it will be some time before he will be sensible of the good I have done him ; and I dare swear, the man is at this time so ungrateful, that, if he could, he would cut my throat. I do not want to have him know the extent of his obligation to me : I shall be satisfied to sit down in the contemplation of my meritorious actions, without enjoying the fame of them. This greatness of mind I learnt of Mrs. Gerrarde. But to return :

The having gained my material point put me into such spirits, that I could have kissed Mrs. Gerrarde ; a liberty which, I assure you, however I never presumed to take. She, for her part, seemed as well pleased with what she had done as I was. I praised her for the part she had acted, though I very much feared she would repent of it when we came to explanations, which I resolved should be on that very day. I told her, I hoped she would oblige me with her company at dinner. She consented with a bow. I had ordered one to be got ready earlier than usual, and directed that it should be in her apartment. We were told it was on table. I never saw Mrs. Gerrarde so agreeable as she was during dinner ; she was in high spirits and good humour : I almost thought it a pity to let her down that day ; but I considered the longer her expectations were kept up, the greater would be her disappointment ;

appointment ; and out of pure charity, I determined to put her out of doubt.

I had been told Mrs. Gerrarde was no enemy to a chearful glass ; but the designs she had formed upon me put her on her guard, and I observed she drank nothing but wine and water, made very small. This, I was afraid, would not be sufficient to keep up her courage under what I intended to say to her. I pretended to be disposed to drink, and insisted on her helping me out with a flask of burgundy. With affected coyness she suffered me to fill her glass ; the second offer I made, her resistance was less ; the third she made no objection to at all ; and the fourth she filled for herself. The wine was excellent ; not that poor sort which is commonly drunk in France. In short, we finished our bottle. I thought her now a match for what I had to say. I had made the glass pass briskly, and had filled up the intervals with singing catches, and rattling on any subject that came into my head.

Mrs. Gerrarde, who no doubt expected I should make an advance of some kind or other, seemed to grow a little out of humour at my levity. I found the burgundy had been quite thrown away upon her, and had had very little effect : she was silent for a few minutes, and seemed to be considering of something : at last she opened, and I will
give

give you the conversation that passed between us, by way of dialogue.

Mrs. G. Mr. Faulkland, it is time that you and I should understand one another's meaning a little better than we do at present: you know very well that you have put an end to all my expectations in England: indeed, if I were at liberty, I could not have the face to return there again in any character but that of your wife. (I was glad she began first, and that, though I guessed at her views she had used so little caution in discovering them, as it at once roused in me indignation which I could not suppress, and without which I could not have brought myself to mortify her as she deserved).

Mr. F. My wife, madam! (stopping her at that tremendous word) be pleased to tell me if I heard you right?

Mrs. G. Yes, Sir, it was your wife I said: if you think you and I are to live together on any other terms, you will find yourself exceedingly mistaken. (I smiled and suffered her to go on). I thought, Sir (stifling the anger that I saw rising), that the words which you yourself dictated in the letter which I just now wrote, where you say, *I had in you found a protector, and by whose means I should be able to pass the rest of my life in a manner more suitable to a woman of a generous way of thinking, than that wherein she considered her-*
self

self as incroaching on the rights of another——

Were not these your own words, Sir?

Mr. F. They were, madam. (To say the truth), there was something equivocal in the paragraph, tho', when I desired her to write it, this construction never entered into my head.)

Mrs. G. Then, Sir, how am I to understand them?

Mr. F. I protest, madam, you have forced a construction that I never once so much as dreamed of.

Mrs. G. Why, Mr. Faulkland (with a very brisk tone), do you fancy that by changing Mr. Arnold for *you* on any other conditions, that I am such a mighty gainer by the bargain?

Mr. F. Why really, madam, if that *were* to be the case, I don't think you would be a very great loser: you have got as much from poor Arnold as you could expect: I am able to do better for you; and as I am nobody's property, it would certainly, in *that* respect, be rather a more eligible course.

Mrs. G. Sir, you use me very ill! I did not expect such treatment.

Mr. F. How, pray, madam? Did I ever say I would marry you?

Mrs. G. No, Sir; but your behaviour has given me room to suppose that such a thing was in your thoughts.

Mr. F. Are you not then the more obliged

obliged to me for treating you with such respect as made you fancy so?

Mrs. G. Respect! respect (muttering between her teeth), Mr. Faulkland! (and she stood up) there is not a man in England but yourself, after what I have declared, that would refuse making me his wife.

Mr. F. What have you declared, Mrs. Gerrarde?

Mrs. G. Why, have I not ingenuously owned my failings, shewed myself sorry for them, quitted them, and made all the reparation in my power?

(I was amazed to see how audaciously she adopted as her own, the sentiments which I had suggested to her: it was so like her, that I could have laughed in her face).

Mr. F. Your behaviour on this occasion, has really been worthy of the imitation of all your own sex, and the praise of ours: for a woman *voluntarily* to quit an irregular life, and that too from mere motives of *conscience*--- (I was stopped by a knavish sneer, which I could not subdue. She saw it and fired immediately; but strutted about the room to cool herself: at last, for I sat very silent, looking at her, and playing with one of the glasses)---

Mrs. G. Mr. Faulkland, if you are disposed to have done trifling, and will vouchsafe me a serious answer, pray tell me, Are you absolutely determined not to marry me?

M. F. Absolutely,

Mrs. G.

Mrs. G. You are not serious, sure ?

Mr. F. My dear creature, why sure *thou* canst not be serious in asking me the question ?

Mrs. G. Sir, I *am* serious, and expect a serious answer.

Mr. F. Why then,---seriously, I have no more thoughts of marrying thee, than I have of marrying the first sultana in the grand seignior's seraglio.

Mrs. G. Very well, Sir ; very well ; I am answered ; (and she walked quicker about the room than before.)

We were both silent. She, I suppose, expected that I should propose other terms, and a settlement ; and waited to try if I would speak. I had a mind to tease her a little, and hummed a tune.

Mrs. G. (Advancing to me and making a low curt'sey, with a most scornful and sarcastical air). May I presume to enquire what your mightiness's pleasure is in regard to me ? Do you intend to keep me for your nurse against your next illness, or intend me for the grand seignior's palace to wait on the first sultana ?

Mr. F. I can't tell (carelessly, and looking another way). I have not yet determined which way I shall dispose of you.

Mrs. G. *Dispose* of me ! *dispose* of me ! why sure the man has lost his senses !

Mr. F. Look you, Mrs. Gerrarde ; we will play no longer at cross-purposes : sit down,

down, and be calm for a few minutes, 'till you hear what I have to say.

(She did so, with a kind of impatience in her looks, that informed me I might have made a free proposal, without any great danger of her resentment.)

Mr. F. How long have you and I been acquainted?

Mrs. G. Lord! what is that question to the purpose?

Mr. F. 'Tis only in order to my desiring you would look back, and, upon recollection ask yourself, if you ever had any reason to look upon me as your lover.

Mrs. G. I made that observation to you when we were travelling together: what is the use of it now?

Mr. F. Did I, in the course of our journey, declare myself to be such, or drop the least hint of devoting myself to you on any condition?

Mrs. G. We did not talk on the subject at all.

Mr. F. Did I ever presume, on the advantage of having you in my power, to venture on the smallest liberty with you; or ever deviate from that respect in my behaviour, that I was used, at all other times, to treat you with?

Mrs. G. I do not say you did; and it was that very behaviour that inclined me to imagine you had other thoughts than those I find you have.

Mr.

Mr. F. You drew a wrong conclusion, though it is to be confessed not a very unnatural one. Such a behaviour might have been so construed by a lady otherwise circumstanced than you were; but I think a woman of your sagacity might have concluded, that, with Mrs. Gerrarde, a man would first have tried his fortune upon gentler terms than those of matrimony.

Mrs. G. Well, well (peevishly); I do not understand your riddles: to the point.

M. F. Why, the point, in short, is this; that, without any particular designs on your person, my whole view, in carrying you out of England, was to break off your intercourse with Mr. Arnold.

(She seemed thunder-struck; but recovering herself, And is *this* what I am to hear calmly? And she flounced off the chair to the other end of the room.

I followed her; and taking her by the hand, begged she would again sit down, and hear me out. I drew her to a chair, and gently set her down in it).

Mr. F. Now, for your own sake, hear me with patience; violence or perverseness will be of no use to you.

Mrs. G. Very well, Sir; I am your prisoner; your *slave* at present: say what you please; 'tis *your* turn *now*.

Mr. F. Well then, Madam, as I said before, I really never had any designs upon you

merely on your own account. I allow you to be a very fine woman, and capable of inspiring love in any man that sees you; but I must tell you plainly, that *love* has had no share in my conduct. (I saw stifled rage in her face; but I proceeded). I have already told you the real motive of my carrying you off: it was, as I said, to dissolve the union between you and Mr. Arnold, and my reasons for wishing to do so are these: Mr. Arnold is married to one of the best women living, for whom I have the highest respect and esteem, and whom I once adored: That lady has, by your influence over her husband, not only been thrown out from his heart, but even thrust out from his house. But the calamity stops not there; she is cruelly aspersed by the world through your suggestions, and I am the person pointed at for the injurer of Mr. Arnold's honour, and the destroyer of his wife's innocence. You have brought shame and grief into a worthy family. Lady Bidulph (an excellent woman) has not been able to overcome the shock of the barbarous treatment her daughter has met with. Her brother, the beloved friend of my heart, suffers equal distress; for, though he is conscious of his sister's innocence, he feels the wounds that her reputation has received; nor can he possibly redress the mischief, as his sister's injuries spring from a cause which her delicacy will not permit to be

be scrutinized. Her two poor children are left without a mother; she herself almost without a friend and sinking every day under the weight of such complicated misery. As for Mr. Arnold himself, I profess no personal regard for him: I scarce know him; but, for his family's sake, I would, on any *other* occasion, risque my life to save him from ruin; for ruin you have almost brought on him. I am no stranger to the sums he has lavished on you; his purchasing an employment for *one* of your brothers, and redeeming another from a prison. You have lost nothing by my proceedings but what I shall make up ten-fold to you, if you behave so as to deserve my kindness. I have now laid before you the true reason for my conduct. I hope, that by breaking the enchantment that tied Mr. Arnold's heart, and blinded his understanding, he may be induced to do justice to his injured lady and her family. If this comes to pass, as I have strong reason to hope, I have no doubt of the lady's character being retrieved. *Groundless* calumnies generally die of themselves, unless industriously kept alive by malice. Mrs. Arnold's blameless conduct, the friendship her brother has all along continued to favour me with, joined to this last apparent proof of my attachment to you, will, I am certain, in the eyes of the world, acquit her of all suspicion of guilt. Your letter to Mr. Arnold will,

as far as relates to your own opinion of her, give unquestionable evidence of her innocence.

Now, Mrs. Gerrarde, lay your hand on your heart, and answer me if I have not given you reasons, which, though they may not be satisfactory to you, are in themselves of weight sufficient to justify my conduct.

I had watched her countenance narrowly during my discourse, which she had listened to without once looking at me. I saw I had shocked and even confounded her; but I saw no remorse, no contrition in her looks. All artifice was now at an end, and she unmasked the fiend directly. She started off her chair with the looks and gestures of a fury; and fixing her eyes (which had really something diabolical in them at that instant) steadily on me, You wretch! she cried, with a voice answerable to her looks, you are such a false dissembling, mean-spirited reptile, that if you had a kingdom to offer me, and would lay yourself at my feet to beg my acceptance of you, I would trample on you like dirt! and she stamped on the floor with the air of an amazon. Do you think you shall carry on this fine-contrived enterprize? No, if I perish for it, I will have vengeance: Mr. Arnold shall know how I have been deceived and betrayed, and I will at least

least have the satisfaction of getting your life, if I lose every thing besides.

A burst of malignant tears now gushed from her eyes ; but she robbed them of their efficacy, by mixing with them the bitterest imprecations against me. She cursed even the innocent Mrs. Arnold, you, and the whole family ; and her own folly, in being blinded by the arts of such a worthless milk-sop as myself.

I let her give vent to her passion, calmly walking about the room all the time ; only now and then casting an eye on her, for fear she would have rushed on me with a pen-knife ; for I have not the least doubt, if she had such an instrument about her, she would have made an attempt that might have given a very tragical turn to my adventures.

When she had done sobbing, I addressed her in a very stern voice ; for I found I had no baby to deal with, and therefore resolved to frighten her into submission.

I told you before, Madam, that violence would be of no use to you : your menaces I laugh at ; you are in my power intirely, and absolutely at my disposal : to think of getting out of my hands would be vain ; for it is as impracticable as flying. No mortal knows where you are but the people of this house, who are strangers to your name and circumstances ; and if they knew both, they

are so totally at my devotion, that it would not avail you. I shall cut off all possibility of a correspondence to England. What then must be your resource? I am prepared against all events; and I would carry you about locked up in an iron cage, like the Turkish tyrant, till I had subdued that termagant spirit, sooner than you should have your liberty to do more mischief. If you have any regard to your own interest, you will endeavour to make me your friend: I have the power and will to serve you; I have done you no injury; I said I would be your protector; and so I will, if you will suffer me to be so. I said I would be the means of your passing your days in a state more eligible to a woman of either spirit, discretion, or a grain of honour, than you have hitherto done. This I am ready to make good, if you will not be wanting on your part to your own happiness. You have acknowledged that you are conscious of your errors, are sorry for them, and are willing to quit them (This was turning her own weapons against herself); if you are in earnest in this declaration, I will give you the means of quitting them. The money you have now in your possession, even with the addition of your little jointure, is not sufficient to promise you such a support as would make you easy, if you were to return to England to-morrow; and your story known (as it would

would be), what could you expect? Do you think Arnold could be so besotted as to receive you again? What must be your resource? Why, to continue, while your beauty lasts, in a wretched, abandoned course. Ten thousand to one you might never light on another whose love would be prodigal enough to enrich you. The only choice left you, is to stay where you are not known, and where, if you behave well, you may gain the respect and esteem which you could never hope for in a place where your history is known. If you will content yourself with an easy fortune, joined to a life of virtue and tranquillity, I will provide you with a husband that many a woman in your circumstances would bless her stars for: I will double the portion you have already, and get it settled on you; and will, on certain conditions, add a handsome yearly income. If you do not like this proposal, I have no other alternative to offer but a nunnery. I know you were bred a Roman Catholick: I am sure therefore I shall do no violence to your religious scruples, if you have any. I can get you admitted with ease: the religious here will think it a meritorious act in me, especially on the terms I shall propose; for I will make it worth their while to receive and treat you as a lady of the first family in France: but remember there is a final period to all intercourse with this world. If you

think you can bring yourself to submit to such a life, I would really recommend it to you; for I am sollicitous for your happiness both here and hereafter: if not, you have the other choice to make; and so, Madam, a husband or a convent; take which you like best: I give you three days to consider of it.

I kept up a severe countenance, and a resolute tone. I rang the bell as soon as I had done speaking. Rachael came in before Mrs. Gerrarde could answer me. 'Take care of your mistress, said I, and left the room, without even the ceremony of a bow, or deigning to look at her. I locked the chamber door, which I took care to clap after me; and, putting the key in my pocket, left the lady and her maid to consult at their leisure.

You know, Bidulph, I am not naturally morose; and that I am not very apt to be wanting in that complaisance which all women expect, and which I really think due to *almost* all women: but this one had, in the preceding scene, so intirely thrown off her sex, that I could hardly consider her as a female. I had known many of her ill qualities before; but those she now discovered, if they did not shew her more wicked, certainly rendered her more disgustful to me than the others. In short, I found that all decorum was to be laid aside: I had gone too far
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not to put the finishing hand to my work ; and I had no other measures to observe, but to finish, by dint of force, what I had begun by stratagem. When I mentioned the nunnery to you in a former letter, it was in mere gaiety of heart : I had no serious thoughts of that kind, nor did I now propose it as a practicable scheme. I knew the woman too well to suppose she would acquiesce ; though, to confess the truth to you honestly, I think, if she refuses my other plan of accommodation, I must compel her to accept of this : nor ought it to be considered in any other light than that of confining a wild beast, who, having already done a great deal of mischief, would still do more, if left at liberty : but I think I shall not be driven to this. I believe she will accept of a husband with a good settlement, sooner than resign her liberty.

And now who do you think the husband is whom I have under contemplation for her ? Why, no less a man than my valet de chambre Monsieur Pivet. He is young and handsome, of good parts, and a man of birth. He tells me he has an uncle that is a marquis, and three or four cousins that are in the high court of parliament. Without a joke, the fellow is of a pretty good family : he was bred a mercer, and in a frolick had run away from his business, when I picked him up at Paris, at the time you and I were there together. He then told me, that he only hired

with me for an opportunity of seeing a little of the world, and that he would one time or other sit down and settle to his trade. I have sounded him on the point in hand, and find him very ready to accept of the lady with all hers faults.

I told you I had introduced him to Mrs. Gerrarde, to serve as her interpreter in the house, at the time I was ill. I did not then tell her who he was ; and both she and her maid take him for no other than an acquaintance of mine, who happens to lodge in the same house with us. The vain rogue has encouraged this opinion, and I suppose passes for a very pretty fellow with them ; for you know Pivet is a Beau, and is really not ungentle. But do not fancy that I intend to impose him on the lady for any other than what he really is. All disguise is now laid aside, and I shall proceed with the utmost plainness and sincerity, as soon as I know the lady's mind in regard to her choice.

Here, my dear Sir George, I must take breath a little : it has been a busy day. I undertook a difficult voyage without the certainty of a landing-place ; a few storms I expected to encounter ; I hope I have weathered the worst, and have come at length to some prospect of an harbour. I expect my next greeting to you will be from a fairer shore.—— Upon second thoughts, I will
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not send this off, till I can put both you and my self out of the reach of suspense. . . .

Congratulate me, Sir George, honour me, as the first of politicians, the greatest of negotiators ! let no hero of remance compare himself to me, for first making difficulties, and then extricating myself out of them ; let no giant pretend to equal me in the management of captive beauties in enchanted castles ; let no necromancer presume to vie with me in skill for metamorphosing tigresses into doves, and changing imperious princesses into plain country nymphs ! *All* this have I brought to pass, without the assistance of enchanted sword or dwarf, in the compass of a few days ; but take the circumstances in the order they occurred.

I left the lady, as I told you, to utter her complaints to her confidante. Rachael, a simple girl, who had just sense enough to regard her own interest, was not likely to give her mistress much consolation ; for she was at least as much *my* friend as her's. How *they* passed the night I know not ; for my own part, I slept in perfect tranquillity. I desired Pivet in the morning to go and inquire, as from himself, how the lady rested. Mrs. Gerrarde, who was still in bed, no sooner heard his voice in the outer room, as he was speaking to her maid, than she called out to Monsieur Pivet, and desired he would be so good as to step into her chamber. Pivet, not
much

much abashed at being admitted to a lady's *ruëlle*, obeyed her summons, and placed himself in an armed chair by her. He said he hoped it was not owing to illness that he saw her in bed. Yes, Sir, said she, I am exceedingly ill : I have not slept the whole night, and am now in a high fever. Has Mr. Faulkland told you any thing in relation to me ? I had prepared Pivet, and he had his answers ready. Madam, said, he, I am not a stranger to your situation, and am exceedingly sorry for it : I wish the little influence I have over Mr. Faulkland could be employed for your service ; but he is a positive man, very enterprising, and not to be controlled by any-body. Do you know my story, Sir, cried Mrs. Gerrarde ? He bowed, and looked down. Mrs. Gerrarde understanding this as an affirmative, and raising herself up a little, cried out, A base, ungenerous man ! Does he intend to expose me wherever he goes ? By no means, Madam, answered Pivet : There is nothing in your story that would do you the least injury in any-body's opinion here : the ladies in France do not think it any disgrace to have lovers.

You are very obliging, Sir, she replied ; and perhaps I have as much to say in my vindication as any woman : but sure never was mortal used in the barbarous manner I am. Do you know the proposal he had the insolence to make me last night ? Either to
take

take a husband of *his* chusing (*any* low fellow, I suppose, he thinks good enough for me) or immediately to go into a nunnery. Oh ! Sir, and she caught hold of his hand, as you are a gentleman, if you have compassion, any humanity towards an unfortunate woman, try to deliver me out of his hands. I have a pretty good sum of money in my possession ; contrive the means of my escape ; my gratitude to you shall be unbounded ! and she wrung his hand.

Ah ! Madam, said Pivet, looking tenderly at her, I would it were in my power ; I should think myself but too happy if it were possible for me to accomplish what you request ; but I fear it will be impracticable : I declare to you, if I were at my own disposal, I would fly with you to the remotest part of the world ; but I am a young man, who have my fortune to make : I am under particular ties here, and have besides such obligations to Mr. Faulkland, as make it impossible for me, consistently with *honour*, to interfere in this business.

Sir, said she eagerly, can't you write a letter for me, or furnish me with the means of informing my friends in England of my situation ?

Madam, said he, before Mr. Faulkland permitted me the honour of seeing you, he engaged my solemn promise that I would not intermeddle in your affairs.

Lord,

Lord, what will become of me! What would you, Sir, advise me to do? For as for that wretch (meaning me), I am determined, if I can help it, not to suffer him to come near me.

'Tis a very nice point, Madam : I really do not well know how to advise : but, to be sure, a nunnery is a choice not to be recommended to a lady of your youth and beauty, unless your inclinations lead you that way ; then indeed—

She interrupted him. Don't name it to me, Sir ; don't name it : I am determined to keep out of *that* snare, if it be for nothing but an opportunity to be revenged on that tyrant : I would marry a beggar sooner than give up that hope.

As for that, Madam, said Pivet, I suppose Mr. Faulkland would not be so ungenerous as to compel you to marry one beneath you : there are many young men of good families who would think themselves honoured by your acceptance of them : your personal accomplishments alone are a sufficient recommendation ; but Mr. Faulkland mentioned to me the additional advantage of fortune. I dare answer for him he will not think of bestowing you unworthily.

I had charged Pivet not to go too far : he thought it time to break off the conversation ; and, rising up, he told Mrs. Gerrarde he was going into my apartment, and desired to know

know if she would honour him with any commands.

Sir, said she, I shall only beg you will tell Mr. Faulkland, that I never *can* think of his proposal; that I am very ill, and beg to be left in quiet for a few days; but shall be very glad to see *you* whenever you are at leisure.

He bowed, and left her; then came directly to me, and repeated the conversation he had with her word for word. I am glad, said I, to find you are so much in her good graces: it will accelerate my plot; but we must not make you too cheap: if we manage discreetly, she may possibly think herself very well off to get you.

At present I stand pretty well with her, Sir, said Pivet: she does not suspect that I am your servant: I fear if she did, as the lady seems to have a high spirit, she would forbid me her presence.

I found Pivet had no mind to have this part of his situation explained: his vanity had been highly tickled at passing upon her for a gentleman and *my* friend.——He had, in obedience to my orders, spent much of his time with her during the few days that I had been too ill to see her. I had, at my first introduction of him to her, cautioned him against letting her know in what capacity he was with me: I did not then give him my reasons for this, and he supposed they were

were no other, than that, finding it necessary to have him pretty much with her in her confinement, I did not chuse to alarm her pride by the knowledge of his station. I did not hint at my design, till the day before I had prevailed on her to write the letter to Mr. Arnold. Pivet did not at all dislike the proposal : he had not been blind to Mrs. Gerrarde's charms : he only seemed surprized at my being willing to part with her so soon ; for he had not the least conception of my reasons for carrying her off, and very naturally concluded I was deeply engaged in an amour. It was not difficult to guess his thoughts on this occasion.

Pivet, said I, I must premise one thing to you : I assure you there is not, nor ever was, any intrigue between Mrs. Gerrarde and me. I do not, however, pretend to vouch for her chastity. It was no secret at V——hall that she had occasioned an unhappy breach in Mr. Arnold's family ; and that, and that *only* (as I have a most particular value and affection for that family), was my motive to the carrying this lady away. As I hope the disunion (now the cause of it is removed) will no longer subsist, I find it necessary to provide for Mrs. Gerrarde some way or other. A good husband I would wish to bestow on her. I do not yet know whether I shall be able to bring her into any measures ; but if she should be prevailed on to accept of you, and I should
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make it worth your while to accept of her, can you overlook the levity she has been guilty of, and resolve to use her kindly?

He promised he would make the best husband in the univ^{er}se. I bid him not be too sure of success, as I did not yet know Mrs. Gerrarde's mind, and feared I should find it hard to bring her into terms; adding, that though I intended to threaten her, I should be very unwilling to make use of compulsion; but if she should happen to like him, without suspecting my design, I might accomplish my purpose with less reluctance on her side, and much more satisfaction to myself.

The conversation he had just had with her elated him highly: she had made him her confidant; she had implored his assistance; she had promised an *unbounded* gratitude; she had prohibited *my* visits, and invited *his*. All this facilitated my work, and I at one time thought of letting her e'en work out her fate, and run blindfold into my trap; for it is plain, if Pivet had given into it, she would have marched off with him, and even married him, to get out of my clutches; and then, you know, she could have blamed nobody but herself for the consequences. But I resolved not to impose on the gypsey any farther; but let her know what she was to expect before the bargain was concluded, and at least give her her option of having
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the power of continuing a jilt, or being canonized for a saint.

I found things were now likely to take such a turn as I wished ; but it still required management. Pivot, said I, you must let her see you no more to day, it will make her prize your company the more : keep out of the way, that you may not be seen by Rachael ; and give such orders in the house, as that there may be proper attendance for the lady. One of my footmen spoke a little French, and he had been directed to receive and communicate Mrs. Rachael's orders in the family.

Tho' Pivot assured me that he thought Mrs. Gerrarde was not so ill as she said she was, I yet thought it incumbent on me to have the advice of a physician. The people with whom I lodged said I could not have a better than the doctor who had attended me, as he was reckoned very skilful. I told them, in the present case, I believed honesty was more requisite than skill. They said he was very honest too ; so I desired he might be sent for.

Mrs. Gerrarde, being determined to carry on the farce of sickness, pretended she was not able to rise ; and the doctor was introduced to her bed-side. As he could neither understand his patient, nor make himself understood by her, I had ordered the footman, whom I mentioned to you before, as know-
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ing a little French, to wait at the chamber door ; for I was resolved so far to keep up my resentment and my importance, as not to vouchsafe assisting at the conference ; which, by this means, became the most ridiculous scene you can imagine. The doctor having felt Mrs. Gerrarde's pulse, proposed his questions by the footman, who just peeped his nose in at the door. He explained them (very ill I suppose) to Rachael in English, who re-repeated them to her lady within her curtains ; for she would not suffer them to be drawn back. Mrs. Gerrarde's answers travelled the same round-about way back ty the doctor, who got them mangled in vero bad French from his interpreter.

Mrs. Gerrarde, provoked, I believe, at the doctor's visit, and very much tired of his questions, asked peevishly where Monsieur Pivet was ? This inquiry I expected ; and the fellow who told me of it, had been ordered to inform her that Monsieur Pivet was not at home.

The doctor, after leaving his patient, came to me, and confirmed the character I had received of him, both for skill in his profession, and integrity in his practice ; for he told me very honestly, that he thought the lady was in perfect health. I thought the doctor deserved a double fee, and accordingly gave it to him ; requesting him, however, to continue his visits : for I told him, that, though
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the lady might really be very well, she was, however, a little vapourish.

I left her to her reflections the whole day. Rachael inquired three or four times of the footman if Mr. Pivet was come in, but was always answered in the negative. I was pleased at her solicitude about him.

I desired him to wait on her the next day, at the time the doctor paid his visit; and instructed Pivet to ask the doctor, in her presence, what he thought of her case, and to report his answer fairly to her; for I was resolved not to let her imagine that she imposed on me.

The doctor, by Pivet's means, discoursed with her more readily than he had done the day before. Pivet asked his opinion of her disorder, and the physician declared it as freely as he had done to me; adding, he should not have repeated his visit, if I had not insisted on it.

Pivet could not help smiling. Mrs. Gerarde observed it; for, I suppose, she watched his countenance, and asked him what the Doctor had said. He says, Madam, what gives me a vast deal of pleasure; which is, that your disorder is entirely imaginary. He is an ignorant fellow, said Mrs. Gerarde; and you may tell him I desire to see him no more. The poor doctor, who knew not what she said, made her half a dozen scrapes, and withdrew.

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She then drew back her curtain; and re-assuming the subject she had been upon the day before with Pivet, asked him if he had any conversation with me about her? and what resolution I had come to?

Pivet (who had begged I would leave this conference entirely to his management) seemed to hesitate a little, and appeared melancholy. We have had some talk about you, Madam, said he; and Mr. Faulkland tells me, if you reject the nunnery scheme (which I think he seems to be fondest of), that he has a person in his thoughts, who, he believes, will be a suitable match for you, if you are willing to accept of it; if not——here he stop'd. What if I should not, Sir? Pray speak. I hope, Madam, he will not carry matters to an extremity. Extremity, Sir! Do you think he can be brutal enough to force me into a nunnery? Are there no laws in France? I *hope* he will not, Madam; but I can't pretend to answer for him: he is a strange man: he seems out of temper too: the doctor told him nothing ailed you; he believes him, and spoke harshly on the occasion. And what, said she, is the match that he calls *suitable*? One of his footmen perhaps, or his barber?

Pivet affected to look concerned. He tells me, Madam, he has cast his eyes on a young man, well born, and genteelly educated; not contemptible in his personal accomplishments,
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and one who he is sure will make you a fond and obliging husband.

Pivet sighed deeply, and cast his eyes languishingly on her. You seem concerned, Sir, said she. Do you know the person? It is my doubt on that occasion, Madam, that is the cause of my uneasiness. Pray explain yourself, Mr. Pivet. Madam, I dare not, he replied, with great solemnity. I will only assure you, that whoever the person be, whom Mr. Faulkland has not yet named to me, I think him the happiest man in the world. What can be his meaning, asked Mrs. Gerrarde, for telling you *so* much, and yet concealing the person's name? He says, he has not proposed it yet to the gentleman, Madam; and as, he tells me, he can't in honour conceal any part of your story, he is fearful—I beg your pardon, Madam; you will excuse me if I do not repeat his scruples on this occasion. I understand, you, Sir. He supposes his friend will reject me. Some such insinuation he threw out, Madam, said Pivet. I told him, that he need only permit the gentleman to *see* you; and if he then made any objection, he must be the blindest and most insensible man alive. He spoke this with a warmth that seemed highly pleasing to the lady. She bowed, and answered, *All* men, Sir, are not as generous as you. But what did Mr. Faulkland say to this? He only smiled, and said he wished his friend might

might think as I did ; that he would tell me his name another time ; and that, in the mean time, it would oblige him if my visits to you were less frequent. Inhuman monster, said she ; would he debar me of the only satisfaction I have ? Let me but live to get out of his hands ! if I can escape him by any means, I will find ways to reckon with him for this. Be so good, Mr. Pivet, to tell him, that I am content to take the person he offers, let him be who he will : I expect nothing from him but insults ; therefore shall not be surprized if I see myself sacrificed to some despicable wretch : but any, *any* thing is better than to be in the power of such a tyrant ! Madam, answered Pivet, you need not fear the being compelled to accept of an unworthy object : Mr. Faulkland declares, that if you should absolutely dislike the gentleman, when you see him, he will be far from constraining you to take him for your husband. The other choice is still open to you, and, by what I can judge, Mr. Faulkland seems to wish you would give that the preference. I would die first, cried Mrs. Gerrarde—The fool, does he think I can be so entrapped ? No, no ; the authority of a husband, even of Faulkland's chusing, cannot be such a bar to my revenge as the walls of a nunnery would be.—Sir, I think myself obliged to you, and flatter myself you would have served me if you could. I may yet have
it

it in my power to make you a return for your kind intentions towards me. I presume, when Mr. Faulkland has disposed of his property, you will then be absolved of your promise to him in regard to me, and will still have charity enough to befriend an unfortunate woman. She wept, and Pivet owned he was ready to do so too; but constraining himself, protested she should command his life, and withdrew full of seeming uneasiness.

He told me what had passed between him and the lady, and I could not help approving his management of the scene, though the rogue had stretched beyond the truth; but stratagems, you know, are allowable in love, and a lover he was now become in good earnest.

He had taken care to alarm Mrs. Gerrarde's apprehensions at every passage of access. He had informed her, that I had a husband for her in my thoughts; and at the same time, that he avoided the most distant hint of its being himself, he engaged her favour by seeming to wish it were. Then he took care to insinuate, at least, a possibility of her being refused by the person designed for her, and this he very naturally supposed would raise his own consequence with her, in case any suspicion should fall on him, of his being the intended husband. He pretended I had taken umbrage at his visiting her, still
more

more to inflame her resentment against me, and increase her impatience to deliver herself out of my hands ; at the same time he artfully hinted that he was not the man destined to be happy. This, as he saw already he was not unacceptable to her, he thought would make him doubly welcome, when she should find herself no worse off. Then the nunnery was mentioned, in terrorem, with broad hints of my resolution. In short, Pivet played his part so cunningly, that it had all the effect he could have wished ; and Mrs. Gerrarde, finding her spirit matched, was obliged to surrender at discretion.

I own I did not expect to have succeeded so soon ; and without Pivet, who had now a feeling in the affair, I certainly should not. I resolved directly to make the best use of the advantage I had gained. I told Pivet that he should be married the next day. He was so transported at the thought, that he begged I would give him leave to go to Mrs. Gerrarde, to declare his love and his good fortune together ; for, Sir, said he, you know she promises to accept of whomsoever you propose, and I hope she will not despise your choice so much as she thinks she shall. Softly, softly, good Monsieur Pivet, your violent hurry will spoil all. I do not mean that you shall see her till to-morrow. Not till to-morrow ! Ah Sir ! do, I beseech

you, Sir, allow me; she will think it very cruel. (Poor Pivet, thought I, thou wilt have enough of her.) Simpleton (to him), this day's suspense will forward your business more than all you could say to her in seven hours: is it not enough you are sure of her? We have other things now to mind. What plan of life do you purpose to pursue? You know I have promised to do handsomely for you.

Sir, said he, I always intended to follow the business I was bred to; and if this piece of extraordinary good fortune had *not* happened to me, I did purpose, tho' you have been the best of masters to me, to have asked your permission to return to my friends, in order to settle in my trade, as I have some capital of my own. But to be sure, Sir, I shall be directed in this, as in every thing else, by your will and pleasure. I approve of your design intirely, said I; but there are certain conditions that must be previously settled between you and me. In the first place, tell me honestly, what is the capital you say you are worth.

He answered, his father had left him about eight thousand livres, which were in the hands of a banker in Paris, whom he named to me, and referred me to him for confirmation of the truth of what he told me.

Well,

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Well, said I, this will go a good way towards setting you up in your own business. Where do you think of settling?

He answered, Paris was the best place for his trade.

On that I put an absolute negative; I said Paris was too much frequented by my countrymen, to be a proper place for Mrs. Gerrarde to make her appearance in, as she was likely to meet there with more of her acquaintance than might be convenient: I told him I had no objection to any other large provincial town.

He said he was born at Dijon, and should like to go thither, as he had many friends there.

Be it so, said I: What I purpose doing for you is this. Mrs. Gerrarde has eight hundred pounds of her own; I will add as much more to it, for which I will give you my bond, till I can have the money remitted from England; and this you shall settle on her, that she may be sure of a support in case of your death, and the interest you shall allow her for her own separate use, but without her knowing that you are tied down to it, that you may have it in your power to oblige her.

He made no reply, but acquiesced with a low bow.

I laughed at the simplicity of his countenance. Pivet, said I, though I have taken

care of Mrs. Gerrarde's interest, I do not intend to neglect yours, provided you make no demur to the terms. You already know my reasons for proceeding as I have done in this affair. I have great cause to apprehend Mrs. Gerrarde's vindictive spirit, if she should find means, which I know she will endeavour at, to lay open the real state of this transaction to some people in England. This might frustrate all that I have been at so much pains to accomplish ; be it your care then to prevent it. I cannot wish you to use harsh measures with your wife ; but if you have address enough to prevent a correspondence with any one in England, (an elopement, for both your sakes, I am not willing to suppose ; though I think, for some time at least, you must keep a strict eye over her) if, as I said, you can prevent a correspondence, I think it will answer my purpose ; and that I may make it your interest to do this, I will bind myself, by as strong an obligation as the law can make, to pay you two hundred pounds a year English, so long as you keep your wife within the bounds prescribed ; provided, if, after three years, I find those terms no longer necessary, they shall, if I then chuse it, become void. I shall also add something to enable you to fit up a house and a shop, that you need not be under a necessity of breaking in upon your capital.

Pivet's

Pivet's gratitude overflowed at his lips for this (as he called it) noble provision. He said, he made no doubt of gaining so far upon Mrs. Gerrarde's affections, as to be able effectually to fulfil his covenant, without using violent methods; but, said he, at all events, I warrant you shall hear no more of her.

Preliminaries thus adjusted, I sent for a notary of reputation, to whom I gave instructions to draw up two separate articles for the purposes mentioned; the latter was to be a secret between Pivet and me, as it was by no means proper for Mrs. Gerrarde to be let into it. The other, which regarded her own particular settlement, was intended for her perusal and approbation. I charged the notary to use dispatch, and he promised to have both the papers ready by next morning, as also the bond which I was to give Pivet for the payment of eight hundred pounds.

The lawyer brought the papers according to his promise, and they were signed, sealed, and delivered in due form. That which was to be the private agreement between Pivet and me, was worded in consequence of an article which I drew up myself, and made Pivet sign; wherein I set forth particulars at large.

Pivet was very impatient to see his beloved, but a little uneasy lest she should be dis-

gusted with him, when she should come to know the situation he had been in. I bid him not be discouraged, telling him I should set off that circumstance of his having been my gentleman (for so I chose to call him) in the most favourable light. I presented him with a very elegant suit of cloaths, which I had never worn, and which fitted him very well, as you know he is nearly of my size. You cannot imagine how handsome the fellow looked when he was dressed, for he had linen and every thing else suitable to his cloaths.

I then desired him to wait on his goddess; but he, who had been so eager a little before, was now quite abashed at the thoughts of making his pretensions known to the lady, and intreated me to present him to her. I saw he was quite disconcerted at the serious scene he was going to engage in.

I pitied him, and told him I would go with him to Mrs. Gerrarde; but that it was proper first to prepare her a little.

He said he thought so too.

I immediately sent for Rachael, and speaking to her at the door, without letting her see Pivet, I bid her tell her mistress that I purposed making her a visit in half an hour, and should introduce the gentleman, whom I expected she would, according to her promise, receive at my hands for her husband; reserving to herself still the liberty of chusing

sing the other alternative, in case she disliked him.

Pivet shewed the sollicitude of a lover, after this message was sent to his mistress; Poor dear lady, said he, how I pity her? What must she suffer in this interval? But your presence, Monsieur Pivet, said I, will dispel all her fears, and make her the happiest of women.

The poor fellow was out of countenance, and, I dare say, as anxious as Mrs. Gerrarde.

As I received no answer from her to my message, I construed her silence as leave to attend her; and accordingly, at the appointed time, I entered her apartment, leading Pivet by the hand.

She was sitting at a table, leaning her head on one of her hands: she cast a look of scorn at me, and immediately withdrew her eyes, not so much as deigning to glance them at Pivet, little imagining that it was *he* who accompanied me, though she knew it was her intended bridegroom.

Pivet was not able to speak; he trembled, and, like a true innamorato, ran to her, clapt one knee to the ground, and ventured, though with great diffidence, to take one of her hands.

This action obliged the haughty fair one to vouchsafe him a glance of her eye.

Her surprize, spite of her assumed airs of grandeur, was not to be concealed; it was apparent, she coloured, and though she intended to have been solemn and lofty, she even *stared*; and I could discover a little gleam of pleasure dance over her countenance.

What! Monsieur Pivet? And then she looked at me, as if for an explanation.

Yes, madam, said I, Monsieur Pivet is the man, (I was going to say the *happy* man, but I did not mean to compliment her; my business was not to make her think I was doing her a favour.) It has been your good fortune to make a conquest of him; and in the hope of your making him a good wife, as I am sure he will make you a good husband, I have consented to the match; and I spoke this in the tone of one, who thinking he has conferred a great obligation on an undeserving object, expects to be thanked for it.

The woman, with all her art and assurance to boot, was quite confounded. I did not give her time to recover herself, but taking the settlement out of my pocket, and reading it to her, Look there, madam, and see if I have injured you in the disposal of your person and your fortune.

Mrs. Gerrarde, always alert when her interest was in the question, took the paper, and notwithstanding her confusion, read it entirely over. Pivet's handsome appearance,
joined

joined to her former prepossessions, had made to good an impression on her, that she began to think the matter worth attending to. When she had read the paper, she put it into Pivet's hands. Sir, said she, it should appear by this that you have acted generously; but as I have already been imposed upon by that gentleman (looking at me) all this may, for aught I know, be a deceit; but as it is not in my power to make terms for my self, it is to no purpose for me to make objections, or to enquire any farther. I am ready to accept your offer, only I should be glad to know who the man really is, that I am to make my husband.

She spoke this with such an air of disdain, that the poor lover, shrunk up and diminished in his own eyes, left me to make an answer. Mrs. Gerrarde, said I, I declare to you solemnly that there is no deception in any thing which you see, nor any foul play meant to you. This young man, whom I now present to you for your husband, is well born, and has many genteel relations in this country; he has it in his power, to my certain knowledge, to make good the settlement he proposes for you, which I will take care to see properly secured. That part of it which is your own property, you have now in your possession, the other half I know is in his. He was brought up to a creditable business, which

which he intends to follow. I know him to be good natured, and of an obliging temper. He lived with me some time, and accompanied me in my travels. I suppose his having been my gentleman, which station he did not accept through necessity, will not be a material objection (and I smiled and affected to look very proud), and I only mention it to convince you that I have no design of deceiving you, or concealing any part of his character.

Pivet coloured (for I stole a side glance at him) and looked sheepish. He began an awkward compliment with a bow, and 'I hope, madam' — but I relieved him; and speaking to Mrs. Gerrarde, You know all now madam, that can be known; therefore, if you are disposed to keep your word, let us put an end to this business to-day. To-day, Sir! Yes, to-day, madam. What occasion is there for farther delay?

Pivet now plucked up his courage. and begged, since she had consented, that she would not defer his happiness. I told her, between mirth and chiding, that I was in haste to get rid of my charge, and was therefore determined to make her over to Mr. Pivet that evening; and telling her I would give orders about the ceremony, left the lovers to make out for themselves a scheme of conjugal felicity. Pivet pleaded his own cause so effectually, that, in the evening, I had the
satisfaction

satisfaction of bestowing, with my own hand, that inestimable treasure of virtue and meekness, Mrs. Gerrarde, on my faithful Squire, Monsieur Pivet; to the no small joy of the latter, and I believe, if the truth were known, to the no great mortification of the former. Mrs. Rachael and myself were the only witnesses of this illustrious union.

When the ceremony was over, I approached, according to custom, to congratulate and salute the bride; but she turned her saucy cheek to me, and affected the whole night vast dignity of behaviour; yet it was so foreign to her nature, that it appeared ridiculous; however it was better than ranting.

I invited them both to sup with me, and treated Pivet with a familiar civility that seemed to please him highly, as it did him credit in the presence of his lady.

After supper, Pivet entreated me to complete the friendly and generous offices I had already done him, by undertaking the settlement of all money matters for him. As he knew I intended to go to Paris, he begged I would receive for him the sum he had in the hands of the banker, which, he said, if I would remit to him, it would enable him to enter upon his business immediately. At the same time he (with no ill grace) presented me my bond again, assuring me he relied intirely

tirely upon my honour for the execution of my promise to him, farther requesting that I would put that, together with Mrs. Gerrarde's money, if she approved of it, into such hands as I should judge most proper for her advantage.

I was pleased at the openness of his proceedings, and promised to do every thing for their mutual satisfaction; but insisted on his keeping the bond, or lodging it in some proper hand, till I could redeem it, by paying the money, which should take care should be speedily done. I told him I thought the sooner he set out for his own province the better. He said, he should be ready the next day, if Mrs. Gerrarde (for he did not yet presume to call her by his own name) did not object to it. He appealed to her with his looks.

She had scarce condescended to open her lips before; but now answered, You may be sure, Sir, I shall not think it too soon to get out of a prison.

He asked her if she chose to take her maid Rachael along with her?

Certainly, she said; I should not be fond of having a servant about me, by whom I should not be understood.

Rachael was now called in, and the thing proposed to her. She seemed rather inclined to return to England; but I told her she
could

could not, in gratitude, desert her lady in a strange country ; and that if she had a mind to make me her friend, which she should find me upon any future occasion, she would attend her home, and continue with her till her mistress was willing to part with her.

The girl upon this consented to stay, and received Mrs. Gerrarde's orders to prepare for their departure the next day.

In the morning I made Piver a present for his travelling charges, and Rachael another ; telling her according to the account I should have of her behaviour, that I would be kind to her. She made me all the promises that I could desire ; assuring me, that it was purely to oblige me that she staid with Mrs. Gerrarde.

Piver told me, that he would send the sum which his wife had, in bills to me, to be appropriated in the manner agreed on : for, he said, that having that morning mentioned to her my generosity, in relation to the bond, she had owned, that, notwithstanding her resentment to me, she had no distrust of my honour in *those* particulars.

I took this opportunity of telling Piver, that when he could get his wife in the humour, he might prevail on her to give an instrument, empowering my steward to receive the little income of her jointure at Ashby, which I would take care should be remitted

mitted to him; for, trifling as it was, it might be serviceable.

When they were ready to set forward on their journey, I begged leave to speak a few words to madam Pivet by herself. She seemed not inclined to the conference, but her husband very obligingly pressing her not to part with me in enmity, and at the same time quitting the room, she was obliged to hear me.

I then very frankly asked her pardon for the lengths I had gone; telling her, that I hoped time, and her own good sense, would convince her that she was more obliged to me, than her passion would then give her leave to see. Remember, madam, I have kept my word with you. You are now married to a very deserving young man; you have a competent support during your life. Happiness is in your power, if you do not wilfully cast it away from you. Shew now that greatness of mind of which you have so often boasted, by forgiving the man, who has, as you think, injured you; and resolving at once on a behaviour that shall, in your turn, intitle you, not only to the forgiveness, but even to the esteem, of those whom you have injured.

I would have preached on, and given her more good advice, but she cut me short, with this decisive answer. Sir, I neither desire your counsel nor your good opinion;

Mr.

Mr. Pivet *may* deserve some regard from me, but *you* I never will forgive, and she flung from me.

I called in Pivet, and telling him I was infinitely pleased at the good disposition I found his lady in, I wished him all happiness and a safe journey, and they set out directly for Dijon.

And now, my dear Bidulph, stop, to praise, to admire, to wonder at my virtue! I, who have had one of the finest women in England in my possession, for so many days (and by the way was not her aversion) to yield up her (by me) unpolluted charms to the arms of another! Add to this, that it has cost me more to make one woman honest, than it need have done to have made half a dozen—otherwise. I had like to have writ a strange ugly word, that was just at the nib of my pen.

If you relate my story with the laudable partiality of a friend, judiciously abolishing the context (for which you may have many precedents), and neatly splicing together the useful fragments, shall I not appear to posterity as great as Scipio himself? Ah! Sir George, if we knew the secret springs of many of those actions which dazzle us, in the histories of the renowned heroes of old, it is not impossible but the wonderful page might dwindle into as insignificant a tale as mine is.

Well,

Well, I thank my good genius that has led me safely through such a labyrinth as I had got into. In getting rid of that woman (and not disgracefully neither), I feel as if I had shaken off a great load. But what a graceless baggage it is, not to thank me for my kindness. I, who have been more than a father to her, in saving her first from perdition, and then settling her well in the world—but there is no obliging some tempers.

I shall leave this place to-morrow, for I must hasten to Paris, to put every thing on a good footing for the new-married pair; and then I will go and ramble I do not care whither, for another year. I shall lodge at Paris, where I did before, and desire you will write to me directly an account of all that passes within the circle of your family. Let your sister and my lady Bidulph know in what manner I have disposed of Mrs. Gerarde; but be sure you do it discreetly, and take care not to mention that paultry circumstance of her settlement, or any other private agreement with Pivet. I know Mrs. Arnold's delicacy would be hurt by the knowledge of this; therefore beware of dropping the least hint of it, at your peril. Tell lady Bidulph I will pray devoutly for her daughter's happiness; if what I have done will promote it, it will not a little contribute to my own; tho' I begin to feel it is not to be

be expected in this life, at least by such a hopeless wanderer as I am.

I could sit now, and indite melancholy verses, or write an elegy, or make my will, or do any other splenetic thing: in short, I have a good mind to turn monk and go into a monastery. I am sure I should have lady Bidulph's vote for that.

Adieu, my dear Bidulph, you will not hear from me again, perhaps, till I am in another region.

Nov. 30.

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